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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda items 41 and 73 (a)**Security Council**
Seventy-second year**Question of Cyprus****Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of
the sea****Letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

With reference to the letter dated 12 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey addressed to the Secretary-General (A/71/875-S/2017/321), I have the honour to state the following:

Greece rejects in their entirety the Turkish allegations contained in the above-mentioned letter regarding the definition of the outer limits of Turkey's continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean as unsubstantiated, unfounded and devoid of any legal basis.

Such allegations totally disregard the ipso facto and ab initio sovereign rights of other States, including Greece, in the maritime area of the Eastern Mediterranean west of meridian 32°16'18''E. These rights derive from the international law of the sea. It has to be recalled that, under both customary and conventional international law, Greek islands, including those in the said area, are entitled to maritime zones of their own (continental shelf and/or exclusive economic zone), as any other land territory.

In this respect, Greece wishes to reiterate its position on these issues as set out on numerous occasions, including in the letters dated 23 May and 8 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Greece addressed to the Secretary-General (A/70/900-S/2016/474 and A/71/675-S/2016/1043, respectively) and note verbale No. 974 of the Permanent Mission of Greece, dated 8 May 2012.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41 and 73 (a), and of the Security Council, and published in the next Law of the Sea Bulletin.

(Signed) Catherine Boura
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



**General Assembly
Security Council**

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**General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 28
Report of the Security Council**

**Security Council
Seventy-second year**

**Letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to convey the following:

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission sent you a letter, dated 27 April 2017, concerning the question of the Moroccan Sahara (see S/2017/405, annex).

Firstly, I would like to recall the triumphant and historic return of Morocco to its natural institutional family, the African Union, thanks to the active support of the overwhelming majority of African countries. Its return, which was decided by consensus during the African Union Summit in January 2017, was warmly welcomed by the entire international community.

The return of Morocco to the African Union will strengthen South-South cooperation among African countries; increase support for African Union strategies for the continent's economic, social and sustainable development; aid the fight against terrorism; and enhance cooperation for sustaining peace, stability, good-neighbourliness and unity of African countries.

On the question of the Moroccan Sahara, the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its position, which has remained unchanged for decades and has already been transmitted officially to your predecessors, to the Security Council and to the General Assembly, that this issue falls within the exclusive remit of the United Nations, namely the Security Council. The regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara is considered by the Council under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations on the pacific settlement of disputes.

Consequently, Morocco reaffirms its categorical opposition to any involvement, in any form whatsoever, of the African Union in the question of the Moroccan Sahara and to any exchange, interaction or contact on this issue between the United Nations, its Secretariat or its bodies and the African Union, its bodies or its representatives, for the following objective reasons:



- The United Nations assumed exclusive responsibility for dealing with the question of the Moroccan Sahara following the failure of the Organization of African Unity to resolve the dispute.
- The process of negotiations aimed at achieving a mutually acceptable political solution to the question of the Moroccan Sahara is conducted under the exclusive authority of the Security Council, under the auspices of the Secretary-General and with the assistance of his Personal Envoy.
- Successive Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2351 (2017), adopted on 28 April 2017, make no reference to the African Union. Those resolutions rightly confer no role or mandate whatsoever to the African Union, or to that organization's Peace and Security Council, in the political negotiations led by the United Nations.
- The Kingdom of Morocco is resolutely committed to cooperating with the African Union on all issues, with the sole exception of the question of the Moroccan Sahara. The reason for this exception is that, for many years, the African Union has blatantly adopted a stance in favour of the other parties. In doing so it has departed from the requirement to remain neutral on this issue and has fully adopted their assertions.
- It is hardly conceivable that the African Union Commission is unaware that, in every Security Council resolution on the Moroccan Sahara since resolution 1754 (2007), the Council has welcomed the "serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution" through the Moroccan autonomy proposal.
- The position of the African Union, which seeks to revive outdated plans that were considered inapplicable by the United Nations and were disregarded by the Security Council, is contrary to the resolutions in which the Council calls for a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution, on the basis of realism and a spirit of compromise.
- Moreover, its position is at odds with that of two thirds of the members of the African Union which do not recognize the so-called "Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic".
- The Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, a post that, since its establishment, has been occupied exclusively by Algerian diplomats, echoes the views of the other parties and is conducting an ongoing aggressive and hostile campaign against the Kingdom of Morocco.
- The reports of the African Union Commission and the resulting communiqués issued by its Peace and Security Council demonstrate a flagrant bias on the question of the Sahara. A simple comparison between the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/307) and the report of the African Union Commission on the question of the Sahara highlights discrepancies in terms of content, approach and treatment of developments in the case.
- The Secretary-General's report focuses on recent developments and the search for a negotiated political solution. In contrast, the report of the African Union Commission remains mired in the past and adopts an approach based on conflict and confrontation. Moreover, its biased and unbalanced content advocates a specific position. There is a similar discrepancy with regard to the role of neighbouring States, in particular Algeria. While the Secretary-General's report states that "Algeria and Mauritania can and should make important contributions to this process", the Commission's report makes no mention of any role or any responsibility of Algeria in the dispute.

- The Organization of African Unity prejudged the outcome of the political negotiations conducted under the exclusive authority of the Security Council by admitting, within its membership, a self-proclaimed entity that has no attribute of sovereignty and is not recognized by the United Nations or by any other regional or subregional organization.

Furthermore, and contrary to the misleading interpretations of the other parties, the return of Morocco to the African Union can in no way be interpreted as recognition of the so-called "Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic", neither from the point of view of international law nor on the basis of United Nations practice. Morocco will never recognize that entity. The overwhelming majority of States members of the African Union do not recognize it either.

With regard to the meeting of the Peace and Security Council held on 20 March 2017, which is mentioned in the letter from the Chairperson of the Commission, I should like to emphasize the following:

- The other parties have a habit of stepping up their manoeuvring the day before the annual meeting of the Security Council on the question of the Moroccan Sahara, held in April, in order to exert pressure on the Council.
- The Algerian Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union abuses his role by using the Peace and Security Council to advance his own anti-Moroccan agenda and his country's position on the question of the Moroccan Sahara.
- The communiqué issued after the above-mentioned meeting lacks objectivity and shows a blatant political bias. Its content is completely at odds with the resolutions of the Security Council, which has exclusive responsibility for the issue of the Moroccan Sahara.
- Morocco sent a note verbale to the African Union Commission (see annex) clearly setting out its position regarding consideration of the question of the Moroccan Sahara by the Peace and Security Council and stating that this issue is dealt with exclusively by the Security Council. In his communiqué, the Chairperson of the Commission deliberately omitted to refer to the note verbale and to the Moroccan position, thereby confirming the Commissioner's bias, insidious manoeuvring and diplomatic crusade against Morocco.
- Instead of following the example set by Morocco, which is working to promote inter-African cooperation and integration in the economic, social, humanitarian and political spheres, the other parties persist in their attempts to divide Africa by forcing "communiqués" on the issue of the Moroccan Sahara which are no reflection whatsoever of the positions of the overwhelming majority of African countries and which are designed to undermine the political process conducted under the sole authority of the Security Council, under the auspices of the Secretary-General and with the assistance of his Personal Envoy.

The Security Council is continuing its efforts to achieve a negotiated solution to the dispute, as demonstrated by resolution 2351 (2017), in which the Council strongly reiterates the final parameters of the political solution, which were established by the Council in 2007, and urges neighbouring countries to make important contributions to the United Nations political process.

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm the irrefutable commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to work, in good faith, with you and your next Personal Envoy, to reach a negotiated political solution to the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara,

within the parameters established by the Security Council in its successive resolutions since 2007.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 28, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Omar **Hilale**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Note verbale dated 19 March 2017 from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Addis Ababa to the African Union Commission

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Addis Ababa presents its compliments to the African Union Commission and, in reference to its note verbale No. PSD/106/1/42265.17 inviting the Kingdom of Morocco to participate in the briefing on the Sahara scheduled for 20 March, wishes to draw its attention to the following:

- A founding member of the pan-African body, the Kingdom of Morocco is returning to its natural place within its African institutional family;
- The return of Morocco to the African Union is driven by its resolve to contribute to African Union strategies for the development and growth of Africa and its commitment to the continent's unity, peace and security;
- The United Nations Security Council is seized of the question of the Sahara and it is the subject of a political process under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Under Article 12, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council continues to exercise its functions in respect of this dispute to seek a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution;
- In this regard, African Union bodies are invited to support this process and henceforth to adopt a position in line with the treatment of the question of the Sahara at the United Nations, at this time when Morocco is returning to the African family;
- The African Union Peace and Security Council, as an African Union body, is invited to adopt a neutral and objective position in its treatment of the question of the Sahara;
- The Kingdom of Morocco hopes that the African Union will avoid any position that could jeopardize the smooth conduct of the process, especially in the light of the election of a new Secretary-General of the United Nations and a new Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Addis Ababa takes this opportunity to convey to the African Union Commission the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.



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**General Assembly
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**Security Council
Seventy-second year**

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

**Letter dated 11 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a press statement released by the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to the United Nations on 11 May 2017 with regard to the criminal state-sponsored terrorism plots against the supreme leadership of the DPRK, which have recently been disclosed (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 108, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Ja Song Nam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated on 11 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Press statement of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations with regard to the criminal state-sponsored terrorism plots against the DPRK supreme leadership, which have recently been disclosed

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations issues the following information regarding a hideous terrorists' conspiracy that was uncovered, in which the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S. and the Intelligence Service of south Korea infiltrated a terrorist into the DPRK on the basis of covert and meticulous preparations to commit state terrorism against the supreme leadership of the DPRK by use of biochemical substance.

It is widely known that the U.S. has staged ever larger nuclear war exercises against the DPRK for the last 2 months with massive deployment of all kinds of nuclear assets, including nuclear carriers, into the Korean peninsula along with special forces for "decapitation operation" aimed at "elimination of the supreme leadership".

The fact that the U.S. fearlessly contrives terror stratagems to eliminate our supreme leadership, together with the south Korean authorities, going as far as to take extreme military adventure, is the clear-cut evidence that the U.S. is the mastermind of undermining international peace and security and the ringleader of international terrorism.

The Ministry of State Security solemnly declared that it will crush out to the last one the organizer, conspirator and followers of the hideous state terrorism by ransacking every corner and every part of the earth, in reflection of the will of the army and people of the DPRK.

The heinous crime, which was uncovered and smashed in the DPRK, is a kind of terrorism against not only the DPRK but the justice and conscience of humankind and an act of mangling the future of humankind, and therefore all the countries should wage a joint struggle to put an end to all sorts of inhumane plots, arbitrariness and evil-doings that ruthlessly trample down the desire for peace and stability.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (General Assembly resolution 60/288, adopted 8 September 2006) stipulates in a preambular paragraph that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Furthermore it is noted in the Counter-Terrorism Strategy that the acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, threatening territorial integrity and the security of states and that the international community should take the necessary steps to enhance cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism.

Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Charter of the United Nations makes it clear that in order to maintain international peace and security, effective collective measures should be taken for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

The United Nations and the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the United Nations Member States will have to respond actively with support to the Korean-style anti-terrorist attack, including targeted at the punishment of criminals.

To help the United Nations Member States understand, attached herewith is the statement of the spokesperson of the Ministry of State Security of the DPRK dated 5 May 2017 (see enclosure).

Enclosure

Statement by the spokesperson of the Ministry of State Security of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of 5 May 2017 with regard to the criminal state-sponsored terrorism plots against the DPRK supreme leadership, which have recently been disclosed

The last-ditch effort of the hostile forces, taken aback by the strong spirit of the DPRK dashing towards the final victory of the cause of Juche revolution, has gone beyond the limits after reaching the extreme phase.

The recent hysteria about "beheading operation" and "pre-emptive attack", openly staged by the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet military warmongers at the doorstep of the DPRK, is just the tip of the iceberg of those moves.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the U.S. and the Intelligence Service (IS) of south Korea, hotbed of evils in the world, hatched a vicious plot to hurt the supreme leadership of the DPRK and those acts have been put into the extremely serious phase of implementation after crossing the threshold of the DPRK.

A hideous terrorists' group, which the CIA and the IS infiltrated into the DPRK on the basis of covert and meticulous preparations to commit state-sponsored terrorism against the supreme leadership of the DPRK by use of biochemical substance, has been recently detected.

The murderous demons of the IS, who conspired with the CIA, ideologically corrupted and bribed a DPRK citizen surnamed Kim, a former worker in the timber industrial branch in the Khabarovsk Territory of Russia in June 2014, and turned him into a terrorist full of repugnance and revenge against the supreme leadership of the DPRK.

They hatched a plot of letting human scum Kim commit bomb terrorism targeting the supreme leadership during events at the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun and at a military parade and public procession after his return home from abroad.

They told him that assassination by use of biochemical substances, including radioactive substance and nano poisonous substance, is the best method that does not require access to the target, their lethal results will appear after 6 or 12 months, biochemical substance can be added in cooperation with the CIA if one single correct information is obtained, the component of terrorism-purposed biochemical substance is the know-how of the CIA and it is only the CIA that can produce such substance, and that hardware, supplies and funds needed for committing terrorism against the supreme leadership will completely be borne by the IS. Then they handed him over a total of 20,000 U.S. dollars, on two occasions, and a satellite transmitter-receiver and let him get versed in it.

In the end, they gave him assurances of IS that they would keep his duty concerning terrorism against the supreme leadership as secret, and infiltrated him, after appeasing and blackmailing him that his families would not be scot-free in case he fails to carry out the duty.

In January, May, August and September of 2016, IS agents had satellite contacts with Kim, who resided in Pyongyang. The IS agents gave instructions to choose and report the most effective and safe method with high probability of success, while presenting him various terrorist methods using biochemical substances along with operational code of terrorism against the supreme leadership,

the ways of bribing an object who would directly carry out the terrorist act and ways of entering the grounds of events.

On 12 August 2016 they gave him an instruction to collect and send as much information as possible concerning the surrounding environment of event ground where celebrations are held frequently, the guard situation there and orders observed at times of events, saying that once concrete and detailed data are given, they would study the most reasonable way in cooperation with the CIA.

Urging him to set up an overseas liaison centre for the safe introduction of equipment, materials and funds for the terrorist acts, they financed him a total of 100,000 U.S. dollars, on two occasions, for setting up the centre and bribing terrorist accomplices.

In March and April last, an IS agent, Jo Ki Chol, and his secret agent, Xu Guanghai, Director General of the Qingdao NAZCA Trade Co. Ltd., met the terrorist accomplice in Dandong, China, and handed him over a new satellite transmitter-receiver and 50,000 U.S. dollars. They signed a "contract" on setting up the overseas liaison centre and let the necessary equipment and materials be introduced as the first instalment in early May.

On 7 April, a guy surnamed Han, chief of the IS team, taught Kim the way of bribing terrorist accomplices, saying that "even the U.S. CIA uses gradual engagement with due consideration given to the greed and mentality of persons depending on which class and strata they belong to" and told him to use it as a reference in engaging terrorist accomplices to be infiltrated to the event ground.

On 4 November 2016 and on 13, 17 and 20 April 2017, they let Kim know that they officially confirmed the types of biochemical substance and hardware to be used for committing a terrorist act against the supreme leadership and requested it from the CIA, and instructed him to restudy the "creed" of the terrorist executor and reconfirm his state of "brainwashing" and report to them about it. They also repeatedly instructed him to take the best measure for the examination and preparations for the terrorist operation, as there can be such catastrophic incident as a war once the fact about terrorist means and funds provided by the IS is known.

The chief of the south Korean puppet Intelligence Service, Ri Pyong Ho, praised the terrorist as a "very valuable existence for the nation and 'IS'" and directly organized the terrorist operation and let the chief of the IS team, Han, and agent, Jo Ki Chol, take the lead in executing it. The puppet forces gave the terrorist more than 80 instructions for the execution of the operation.

Recently, the CIA and the IS actively spread the story about "emergency situation in the north" while trumpeting about advantages of terrorism by use of biochemical substances, as such way can minimize the adverse effect on the executor and the back-stage manipulator and help evade retaliation against the assailant side and international denunciation. Lurking behind the story was the heinous plot that has been pushed forward in top secrecy.

The DPRK Ministry of State Security clarifies as follows, upon authorization, since the hysteria of the U.S. and the south Korean puppet intelligence institution aimed to hurt the dignity of the DPRK supreme leadership has reached the dangerous phase, which can no longer be overlooked:

1. We will ferret out and mercilessly destroy to the last one the terrorists of the U.S. CIA and the puppet IS of south Korea targeting the dignity of the DPRK supreme leadership.

We do not view the recent hideous crime just as an act of encroachment on the security and sovereignty of the state that can be committed by dishonest hostile forces.

The recent case was the most vicious challenge and the declaration of a war aimed to hurt the mental mainstay that all the Korean people absolutely trust and repose and to eclipse the eternal sun of the DPRK. It is the fixed will of the army and people of the DPRK that they can never tolerate even dreaming about such a crime.

Criminals going hell-bent to realize such a pipe dream cannot survive on this land even a moment. This is a stern punishment made on behalf of the human conscience and in the name of all Koreans.

The Ministry of State Security, whose mission is to safeguard the leader, the social system and the people, will ferret out to the last one the organizer, conspirator and followers of the recent hideous state-sponsored terrorism, even by ransacking the whole earth, in reflection of the will of the army and people of the DPRK, burning their hearts with hatred and wrath against the hideous murderous devils, no matter at which corner of the planet they may be.

2. Korean-style anti-terrorist attack will be commenced from this moment to sweep away the intelligence and plot-breeding organizations of the U.S. imperialists and the puppet clique, the most mean and brutal hideous terrorist group in the world.

Even though we wipe out all those villains involved in the recent hideous state-sponsored terrorism, there is no vouch that the enemies would stop manoeuvring as long as the chieftains and the plot-breeding bases remain.

It is not a secret that the U.S. imperialists and the puppet group of traitors are getting all the more reckless with each passing day and their moves are spearheaded against the supreme headquarters of the Korean revolution.

It is as clear as noonday that such heinous crimes targeting the supreme headquarters of the Korean revolution would continue to be attempted, as long as the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet group of traitors remain unchanged in their hostile policy towards the DPRK, and the CIA and IS are running amok as a spearhead in executing the policy.

Therefore, it is our determination to root out all the dens of plot and trick like CIA and IS, the source of all evils in the world, and a series of more powerful our-style anti-terrorism striking actions will begin immediately.

3. All the countries and peoples of the world that value justice and peace should resolutely turn out in the sacred struggle to terminate the heinous terrorist act committed by the U.S., kingpin of terrorism and chieftain of plot, and the south Korean puppet group of traitors.

The present international situation proves that terrorism is a common enemy to humankind and the world would have no moment of peace unless terrorism is eradicated.

The bloody terrorist acts of CIA and IS backed by the U.S., the empire of evil, in different parts of the world, surpass terrorism which is said to be perpetrated by "Islamic State" forces.

Nevertheless, the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet group of traitors have often brought charges of "terrorism" against anti-U.S. states and resorted to unprecedentedly hideous terrorism, without hesitation, under the pretexts

of "anti-terrorism war", "opposition to biochemical weapons", "sponsor of terrorism", etc.

The heinous crime, which was recently uncovered and smashed in the DPRK, is a kind of terrorism against not only the DPRK but the justice and conscience of humankind and an act of mangling the future of humankind.

The world free from fear of terrorism is no more than a daydream, as long as there exist in it such groups of bloodthirsty felons as CIA and IS, common enemies hoodwinking and trifling with humankind and outrageous destroyers of the earth.

The honest peace-loving peoples of the world should wage a joint struggle to put an end to all sorts of inhumane plots, arbitrariness and evil-doings that ruthlessly trample down their desire for peace and stability.

The U.S. and the south Korean puppet group of traitors should clearly see their dirty looks as bloodstained homicidal maniac and make an apology to the DPRK for their atrocious state-terrorism and inhumane crime and immediately put the criminals to the death penalty.

If they continue to make challenges with disregard for the DPRK's warning and common desire of humankind, they are bound to meet nothing but the most miserable end in history.



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Agenda item 32

**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications
for international peace, security and development**

**Letter dated 15 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Abkhazia addressed to the States Members of the United Nations, the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the States members of the Council of Europe (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32.

(Signed) P. Ilichev
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Abkhazia addressed to the States Members of the United Nations,
the participating States of the Organization for Security and
Cooperation in Europe and the States members of the Council
of Europe**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Abkhazia considers it necessary to explain the position of Abkhazia on the issues addressed in the draft resolution on internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, put to a vote at the United Nations General Assembly by Georgia, as well as other material circulated by Tbilisi, including quarterly reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the human rights situation in Abkhazia.

First of all, it should be noted that the content of such material leaves no doubt that its main purpose is to misrepresent the human rights situation in the Republic of Abkhazia and to denigrate our country as a whole. The distribution of such documents demonstrates that the Georgian authorities have not abandoned a flawed and fruitless policy that seeks to instil a number of false notions and stereotypes about Abkhazia in the consciousness of the international community.

Among such propaganda labels and stereotypes are the following assertions: that there is no such State as the Republic of Abkhazia and that it is a part of Georgia; that the Abkhaz authorities are purportedly delaying a solution to the refugee problem; that the Republic is impeding access to representatives of international organizations; and that it is a territory where human rights are being violated, including the rights of national minorities, where the right to movement is restricted and where lawlessness and anarchy reign. Such absurd and unjustified accusations against the Republic of Abkhazia are also heard regularly at various levels, even the very highest ones.

All advocates of the "territorial integrity of Georgia" need to be reminded that the Republic of Abkhazia defended its right to independent existence in a bloody war with the forces of the State Council of Georgia and, since 1993, it has been an independent and sovereign State. However, the leaders of Georgia stubbornly continue to pretend that nothing occurred and, at every occasion, make claims about fictitious territorial integrity.

A traditional topic that the Georgian authorities use to their advantage is the so-called "refugee problem". The impression given from reading Georgian documents on this issue is that Georgia is still living in the realities of the early 1990s. Meanwhile, back in 1999, the Republic of Abkhazia unilaterally offered Georgian refugees the opportunity to return to their homes in the Gali district. To implement this initiative by the Abkhaz authorities, a governmental commission was set up to tackle issues related to the social and economic rehabilitation of the district and the creation of the necessary conditions for the orderly and safe return of refugees to the Gali district.

This unilateral initiative by the Abkhaz authorities provoked a harshly negative reaction from Georgia, which alleged that the security of the returning refugees had not been fully assured.

Georgia has deliberately and systematically continued to escalate tension and to destabilize the situation in the Gali district. The Georgian authorities have

organized various pickets and demonstrations on their side of the frontier, threatening and intimidating Georgian refugees returning to Abkhazia in an effort to prevent their mass return to the country. What the Georgian authorities are really worried about in this situation, however, is the unresolved core issue: under whose jurisdiction will the returning Georgian refugees find themselves? According to the Georgian authorities, refugees who return to the Gali district of Abkhazia before it is brought under the jurisdiction of Georgia are lost to Georgia.

It has become clear that the Georgian authorities are not interested in the return of refugees until Georgian jurisdiction over Abkhazia has been restored. The issue of refugees is essentially being used merely as a tool for putting pressure on Abkhazia. All this is direct confirmation of the true intentions of Georgia, which is not seeking any solutions to the humanitarian issues and is constantly politicizing the process of refugee return.

Moreover, every kind of obstacle has been placed in the way of those who responded to the Abkhaz initiative and decided to return to Abkhazia, including such measures as intimidation, threats to cut off assistance provided by international humanitarian organizations, the seizure of passports and other unlawful actions. Georgia has resorted to these blatantly destructive actions to sow fear among local people returning voluntarily to their homes, and also to demonstrate to the international community the alleged inability of the Abkhaz leadership to restore order in this "problem" region.

Nevertheless, despite such actions by Georgia, some 50,000 people have taken advantage of this opportunity provided by Abkhazia.

On the issue of refugees, attention should also be drawn to what are deliberately inflated figures for the number of refugees from Abkhazia. According to various Georgian sources their number stands at over 300,000, and at over 400,000 in other, entirely fanciful, estimates. Similar figures also appear in the quarterly reports of the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What these figures are based on remains a mystery. Yet the Georgian delegation relies on such distorted information in its statements at various forums of the United Nations system and of international and regional organizations.

It should be recalled that, according to the last all-union census of 1989, the population of the Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was 525,000 and included 240,000 ethnic Georgians. The number of people who have fled Abkhazia as a result of the conflict clearly cannot exceed that figure. Moreover, as was already noted, around 50,000 people have returned to the Gali district of Abkhazia. It is therefore quite clear that the figure of over 300,000 refugees, which is usually mentioned by Georgian officials, is spurious.

It must also be noted that, in spite of concerted efforts in the Republic of Abkhazia by various influential international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which was directly responsible for monitoring the refugee return process, UNHCR experts have still been unable to verify the return of refugees to the Gali district and their return to the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia has therefore not been officially registered.

In response to repeated requests from the Abkhaz authorities, UNHCR conducted a study among Georgian refugees living in Georgia regarding the conditions under which they would be willing to return en masse to Abkhazia. It is telling that, in the survey, 94.1 per cent of respondents stated that they would only return to Abkhazia after it had been reintegrated with Georgia. Only 2.5 per cent of the Georgian refugees are willing to return to their permanent homes in a Republic of Abkhazia which is independent of Georgia.

It should be noted that the Geneva discussions on security and stability in the South Caucasus are the only international forum at which official representatives of Abkhazia and Georgia participate. For the Republic of Abkhazia this is the only international platform where the official position of Sukhumi is articulated, whereas Tbilisi officials are constantly raising the problem of Abkhazia and, in particular, the issue of refugees, at other international forums where representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia are not in attendance and do not have an opportunity to express their views. Owing to this, Abkhazia refuses, as a matter of principle, to discuss the issue of refugees within the framework of the Geneva discussions. It would be possible to change this policy, if representatives of Abkhazia were given an opportunity to articulate their positions at the United Nations.

No one should have any doubt that the examples of human rights violations being disseminated by Georgia, including those alleged to have occurred in the Gali district of the Republic of Abkhazia, are false and misleading.

A large number of similar Georgian documents also address the crossing of the State border at the Inguri River, as well as cases of citizens being detained for violating the regulations governing the crossing of the State border between the Republic of Abkhazia and Georgia.

As regards the procedure for crossing the Abkhaz-Georgian State border at the Inguri River and, in particular, the decision taken by the Government of Abkhazia in December 2016 to close two temporary crossing points, we cannot fail to note that this issue is being deliberately politicized by Georgia and its Western friends.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Abkhazia has repeatedly explained that determining the regime for crossing the State border is an exclusively domestic matter for the Republic of Abkhazia. It must once again be recalled that the closed crossing points were temporarily operational over a period (from 2012 to 2017) while the conditions necessary to comply with modern infrastructure standards had not yet been met. In 2016, a convenient bus service began to run and the capacity of the main crossing point at Inguri was increased. All these measures were aimed at establishing a more effective system to manage the crossing of the State border between Abkhazia and Georgia, and also creating comfortable conditions for accessing and crossing the State border by road. They were in no way intended to create any obstacles for residents in the Gali district. For the record, the claims made by Georgian officials and various friends of Georgia about restricted movement across the State border at the Inguri River are absolutely unfounded.

Other accusations being made against Sukhumi are that the Abkhaz authorities are allegedly discriminating against residents in the Gali district and violating and restricting their rights.

It should be recalled that, in December 2015, the Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia adopted the Act on the legal status of foreign citizens in the Republic of Abkhazia and the Act on the procedure for leaving and entering the Republic of Abkhazia. The former Act was adopted because of the need to establish the legal framework governing the rights of foreign citizens in Abkhazia, while the latter Act governs the procedure for both Abkhaz and foreign citizens leaving and entering the Republic of Abkhazia. Furthermore, these Acts are an important step towards resolving the status of residents in the Gali district.

Meanwhile, a large proportion of residents in the Gali district have received Georgian citizenship, which is incompatible with the legislation of Abkhazia. The Act on the legal status of foreign citizens removes the legal vacuum that had arisen regarding the status of Gali residents. This Act enables long-staying foreign nationals in Abkhazia to obtain residence permits and temporary residence permits.

Residence permits are issued for a period of five years. Upon expiry, residence permits may be extended for another five years. The number of extensions is unlimited. An individual with resident permits spanning 10 years may submit a request for Abkhaz nationality, on condition of continuous residence in the territory of Abkhazia (in accordance with the Act on citizenship). Accordingly, the adoption of this Act has established the necessary conditions for the status of residents in the Gali district to be clarified.

It should also be noted that as a result of the steps taken by the leadership of Abkhazia there has been a significant improvement in the criminal situation in the Gali district in recent years. This has also been confirmed by local residents.

The accusations being made about infringements of the right of schoolchildren in the Gali district to receive an education in their mother tongue are also largely spurious. It should be pointed out that the measures taken by the Abkhaz leadership to transfer schools in the lower Gali district to Russian-language education are fully in accordance with the Constitution and legislation of the Republic of Abkhazia. The State language of the Republic of Abkhazia is Abkhaz. Russian and Abkhaz are the recognized languages of governmental and other institutions. We note that, for example, Armenian schools, which are a successful example of a well-functioning model of multilingual education, teach both the Russian and Armenian languages. These schools also teach Abkhaz as a State language. Georgian schools in the Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts switched to Russian-language education back in 1994. However, 11 village schools in the lower Gali district were long-time exceptions and were not, in practice, integrated into the Abkhaz system of education. In 2015, these schools were transferred to the special State education programme, in accordance with which the first four grades transferred to Russian-language education. It should be noted that the teachers at these schools took Russian-language courses in the summer of 2015 in preparation for this switch to the Russian language.

The accusations often repeated by Georgia in its resolutions and other material, alleging that the Abkhaz authorities restrict access to and hamper the activities of international organizations in Abkhazia, are utterly baffling. It should be noted that there are currently 10 international organizations operating in the Republic. Three of these are branches of United Nations entities: the United Nations Development Programme, UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been operating in Abkhazia since 1993. Organizations such as Action Against Hunger, World Vision International and Halo Trust also work there, and 2017 saw the opening of a new office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

In addition, Abkhazia meets all the necessary conditions for the work of experts in the field of human rights. In 2015 and 2016 extensive work was done by Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, a respected authority in the field of human rights. The results of his research were published in a special report. In that context, it is clear that any talk of Abkhazia supposedly being "closed" is outright disinformation.

We wish once again to draw the attention of the international community to the blatantly coordinated and discriminatory visa policy of the European Union and Georgia, which is designed to bring about international isolation of the citizens of the Republic of Abkhazia. This policy, which has been implemented by the Georgian authorities with the support of their partners in European Union countries, contravenes all existing norms of international human rights law.

It must be emphasized that these actions not only violate the human right to freedom of movement, but are also contrary to fundamental international principles, including freedom of access to education, skilled health care, cultural and athletic

activities, and many others. In essence, what we have here are serious obstacles to the right to development of an entire people. However, all these facts testifying to discrimination against our citizens and the violation of their rights are being overlooked or simply ignored.

Georgia itself is a wilful violator of international human rights standards, depriving the citizens of Abkhazia of the opportunity to exercise their rights without impediment.

It should be underscored that this policy is reinforced by Georgia at the legislative level. We refer here to the discriminatory Georgian Act on the so-called "occupied territories", pursuant to which citizens of foreign countries entering the territory of the Republic of Abkhazia from the Russian Federation are liable to criminal prosecution in Georgia. These actions by the Georgian leadership directly contravene article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms the right of every person to freedom of movement, and to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country.

The need to review the discriminatory Act on occupied territories was also mentioned by the European Commission in its 2014 report and recommendations on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Georgia. In the opinion adopted at its ninety-seventh plenary session on 6 and 7 December 2013, the Venice Commission also urged the Government of Georgia to take that step, regarding the discriminatory Georgian Act on occupied territories.

It should be noted that there has been a positive trend as regards the situation of human rights in the Republic of Abkhazia and, in particular, the functioning of human rights institutions. The office of Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), serving under the President of Abkhazia, was established in 2007. This office was a temporary post, until the adoption of a law which instituted the Ombudsman for Human Rights as an independent and autonomous institution. In February 2016 the People's Assembly of the Republic of Abkhazia adopted the Act on the Ombudsman for Human Rights in the Republic of Abkhazia, in accordance with which the Ombudsman is elected by Parliament for a term of five years (with the opportunity for a second five-year term). The Ombudsman was appointed by Parliament in November 2016. The Act grants the Ombudsman very broad powers. For example, he is entitled to review complaints about the decisions and actions of any government body, local authority or official. Furthermore, the Ombudsman has jurisdiction to review complaints from foreign citizens and stateless persons. The Act restricts interference in the Ombudsman's work and influence on him in any form.

It is regrettable to have to note that the blatant defamation of Abkhazia through misinformation, a practice begun in the 1990s, continues to this day. All manner of bogus and false stories are being fabricated about what is happening in Abkhazia. Senior Georgian officials make completely unfounded and irresponsible statements about supposed anarchy in Abkhazia, acts of banditry, abductions and so forth. They declare Abkhazia to be either a hotbed of terrorists or a source of fictitious radioactive materials.

Meanwhile, it is clear to any unbiased observer that the Republic of Abkhazia is a successfully developing State with all the necessary attributes, having proven its viability and effectiveness. Abkhazia has established a stable political system and regularly holds competitive elections.

The new composition of the Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia was recently determined in elections held in March 2017. Thirty-nine international observers monitored the parliamentary elections in Abkhazia. Despite some

observations, on the whole they highly commended the elections. The new Parliament represents various political, including opposition, forces.

The Republic has fully functioning civil society institutions, non-governmental organizations and independent media.

We firmly believe that the content of the draft resolutions proposed by Georgia, and the reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, bear no relation to current realities. These politicized documents are contrary to the spirit of the Geneva discussions and may be detrimental to the long-standing efforts made by the parties and the international mediators to normalize relations and strengthen security in the South Caucasus.

Given the above, the Abkhaz authorities once again insist on the need for their participation in the work of the Main Committees of the United Nations, including those dealing with refugee issues, in order that they can put forward their own position to the representatives at the General Assembly. We firmly believe that this problem cannot be resolved without taking due account of the views and positions of the Abkhaz authorities.

Unfortunately, the Abkhaz authorities have been deprived of the opportunity for contact with the Main Committees of the United Nations and with the delegations of States Members of the United Nations, as the United States Department of State, abusing its country's position as the host of the United Nations, routinely refuses to grant entry into the United States of America to the official representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia.

We call upon the States Members of the United Nations to give their attention to such discriminatory practices, which contradict existing international norms, and take the necessary measures to enable the Abkhaz delegation to travel to the United Nations General Assembly and participate in the work of the Main Committees prior to the vote in the General Assembly on the issue of refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

2 May 2017



General Assembly

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Seventy-first session

Agenda item 32

**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications
for international peace, security and development**

**Letter dated 15 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Ossetia addressed to the States Members of the United Nations, the participating States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the States members of the Council of Europe (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32.

(Signed) P. Ilichev
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
South Ossetia addressed to the States Members of the
United Nations, the participating States of the Organization for
Security and Cooperation in Europe and the States members of
the Council of Europe**

Since 2009, Georgia has every year submitted a draft resolution to the United Nations General Assembly on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The text of the resolution imposed on the international community by Georgia contains no reference to the fact that the appearance of these refugees and internally displaced persons is directly related to the wars waged by Georgia against South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Nor is there any reference to the fact that over 100,000 Ossetians have become refugees as a result of ethnic cleansing in Georgia, and that the Georgian authorities have done nothing at all since then to solve the problems of the refugees.

The refugee issue has been a harsh reality of life for several generations in South Ossetia over the past 100 years. It began in June 1920, when Georgian forces carried out a brutal massacre and set fire to our entire country for refusing to recognize the authority of Georgia, which had decided to secede from Russia and take with it the Ossetian lands. Several thousand Ossetians then became victims of genocide. Almost the entire surviving Ossetian population of South Ossetia was forced to flee through the passes of the Great Caucasus Range into Russian territory. The resettlement commission set up by the Georgian Government worked tirelessly for a few months to remove all Ossetians from the territory of South Ossetia and to relocate Georgian peasants to Ossetian lands, distributing among them the movable and immovable property confiscated from the Ossetians.¹

Ossetian refugees were able to return only a year later, in 1921, after the Red Army had entered Georgia. The Bolsheviks then divided up Ossetia, handing over the southern area to the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, while the northern area remained part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. South Ossetia was granted autonomous status within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, but that status was not sufficient protection for the national rights of the Ossetians, who suffered discrimination and harsh repression by the nationalistically inclined powers of Soviet Georgia. In the second half of the 1940s, about 10 per cent of the Ossetian population in the autonomous district was forced to move to North Ossetia, thereby becoming forcibly displaced persons.

At the end of the 1980s, radical nationalism was on the rise in Georgia, and one of its regular slogans was "Georgia for the Georgians". There were open calls to remove all Ossetians and other non-Georgians from the country, abolish the autonomous status, forbid non-Georgians from having more than two children and prohibit the use of non-Georgian languages in the workplace and in education. Attempts by South Ossetia to establish legal guarantees for its autonomous status were categorically rejected, and a campaign was launched to abolish the autonomous status.

¹ Genotsid osetin: 1920 (dokumenty i materialy) [the genocide of the Ossetians: 1920 (documents and materials)], Tskhinvali, 2009, pp. 81-83.

Georgian nationalists soon moved on from political declarations on the issue to violent action. The escalation of armed violence against the Ossetians not only in the territory of South Ossetia, but also within Georgia itself, resulted in a stream of refugees forced to flee from the Georgian gunmen. Ossetians from the Borjomi district of Georgia were forced to cross the mountain passes and seek refuge in Armenia. Hundreds of Ossetians disappeared without trace in Georgian territory.

Even Ossetians in South Ossetia began to experience harassment in villages with mixed populations. Their Georgian neighbours, influenced by propaganda and with armed support from Tbilisi, forced the Ossetians to abandon their homes, which were then looted and burned or were taken over by Georgians, just as had occurred in 1920. Ossetian villages were attacked by gangs of Georgian gunmen who massacred the Ossetian inhabitants and burned their homes. Unfortunately, these events did not receive adequate attention from the international community and these crimes were not duly condemned. Over 100,000 Ossetian refugees fled Georgia and Ossetian towns in South Ossetia in 1991 and 1992, and they found refuge, just as they had in 1920, in North Ossetia and other entities of the Russian Federation.

The ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Ossetians perpetrated by Georgia caused great concern in South Ossetia. In May and June 1992 the Russian Federation, which could not stand idly by, applied all possible political leverage to compel Georgia to stop the armed violence. The agreement on principles for the settlement of the Georgia-Ossetia conflict² (Sochi agreement), signed in Sochi on 24 June 1992, provided for a ceasefire, the creation of a trilateral peacekeeping force (Georgia, Russia and South Ossetia) and the beginning of negotiations for the return of refugees. Over the intervening years, however, the number of Ossetians who have returned to Georgia and regained their property has not reached the thousands or even the hundreds. The Georgian forces have used all kinds of tricks to deny the Ossetians the right to the return of their seized property.

Nevertheless, the Georgian authorities have recognized the existence of the Ossetian refugee issue. The former President of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, referred to this issue on several occasions. During the negotiations for a settlement of Georgia-Ossetia relations, some steps were taken to resolve the refugees' problems. According to the statement made following the meeting between the President of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, and the President of the Republic of South Ossetia, Ludvig Chibirov, on 14 November 1997, the parties noted with satisfaction that over the past year some progress had been made with regard to the return of refugees. The Georgian side once again confirmed its willingness to facilitate the return of Ossetian families who had been forced to leave areas of Georgia that were outside the conflict zone on account of the illegal actions taken against them. It had been recognized that the year 1998 should be the year of the return of the refugees and forcibly displaced persons to their former places of residence, and the relocation was to be organized within the framework of the Joint Control Commission.³

Under the agreement of 24 June 1992, the parties had established the Joint Control Commission on the settlement of the Georgia-Ossetia conflict. The Commission formed an ad hoc committee in 1997 to support the voluntary return of refugees and forcibly displaced persons and adopted a procedure for the voluntary return to their places of former permanent residence of refugees and persons forcibly displaced as a result of the Georgia-Ossetia conflict.⁴ In the context of the

² *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, No. 145, 26 June 1992.

³ *Iuzhnaya Osetiya*, No. 65 (4771) (17 November 1997).

⁴ Protocol No. 7 of the 13 February 1997 meeting of the Joint Control Commission on the settlement of the Georgia-Ossetia conflict.

committee's efforts, and with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a few hundred Georgian families had returned (mainly to the Znauri district) by 2004, whereas only a few dozen Ossetian families had returned to Georgia. Only four of those Ossetian families managed to stay there, while the rest were forced to return to North or South Ossetia because of the lack of even minimal living conditions for them in Georgia and the continuing threat to their security. The main reasons for Ossetians not returning to Georgia were and continue to be: the lack of security guarantees, the absence of a right to the return of their seized homes, the lack of job prospects and the lack of opportunity to receive an education in their native language or in the Russian language.

Under pressure from the international community, the Georgian authorities reported for a number of years on the preparation of a bill on property restitution and payment of compensation to victims of the conflict in the former South Ossetian Autonomous District in the territory of Georgia. The law was passed in 2006, but not a single Ossetian family has received compensation or had their rights to forfeited property upheld on the basis of that law.

In all of the intervening years, Ossetian refugees and forcibly displaced persons have received assistance only from the authorities of the Russian Federation and North Ossetia, the entity of the Russian Federation that received the main influx of refugees, the authorities of the Republic of South Ossetia and also, to a limited extent, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Thanks to this assistance, the majority of the refugees have settled down in their new areas, but they have not received any compensation from Georgia for the material and moral damage suffered. The pressing issue of Ossetian refugees from Georgia still needs to be addressed.

Over the period 2007-2008, the Georgian special services organized a continuous series of cruel terrorist acts and murders of Ossetians in an attempt to provoke retaliation. Having failed to achieve this goal, in the night before 8 August, Georgian forces carried out an armed attack on South Ossetia.⁵ North Ossetia once again received an influx of refugees. The North Ossetian services counted over 35,000 Ossetian refugees who crossed the border during the August war, most of them older people or women with children.

A few days after the invasion of South Ossetia had begun, the aggressor was stopped by Russian troops and forced to make peace. The Ossetian refugees began to return, and most of those who were displaced because of the 2008 war have now returned. A few thousand Georgian-speaking inhabitants have also returned to South Ossetia (which has a total population of 53,500), to the Leningorsk district that had been liberated from Georgian occupation, an occupation that had lasted from 1992 to August 2008. Some of the ethnic Georgians who were removed by the Georgian authorities from the area of presumed military activity prior to the invasion, together with local fighters who took part in the attack on South Ossetia and then fled to Georgia, are still displaced.

The refugee issue was first taken up at the international level in the Geneva discussions that began in October 2008 under the Medvedev-Sarkozy plan. Several productive meetings took place in that forum in 2008 and 2009, at which the participants began to discuss approaches to the refugee issue. In 2009 the South Ossetian side unilaterally proposed an initiative for the return of refugees to the

⁵ After conducting an investigation, the special independent commission set up by a decision of the Council of the European Union of 2 December 2008, headed by Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, published its report on 30 September 2009, in which it was confirmed that Georgia had started the war (see Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, September 2009, vol. II, p. 209).

Leningorsk district. However, the Georgian side criticized and rejected this initiative.

Instead of consistently working to resolve the complex and multidimensional refugee issue, in 2009 Georgia chose to politicize the issue by introducing a draft General Assembly resolution on refugees and displaced persons from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, an action that it has repeated annually ever since. The heavily politicized text of this resolution, which the Georgian authorities have imposed on the international community, manipulates the humanitarian issue. Rather than an attempt to resolve the humanitarian problem, the text reflects Georgia's pursuit of a political goal — a declaration of the non-existent "territorial integrity" of Georgia within the borders of the former Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic.

While politicizing the refugee issue and reaffirming the need for humanitarian access, the Georgian authorities are in fact blocking such access and hindering contacts between representatives of international organizations and the refugees from Georgia who are now in South Ossetia. In October 2015, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the South Ossetian authorities reached an agreement regarding the visit to South Ossetia of representatives of the Office, who were to assess the situation of refugees living in collective accommodation in South Ossetia and consider the provision of additional humanitarian assistance. However, at the last minute, the representatives were forced to postpone their visit on account of interference from Georgia. Despite opposition from Georgia, representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees paid such a visit to South Ossetia in August 2016. Representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees visited collective refugee centres in Tskhinvali and also visited the Leningorsk district, where they had the opportunity to see for themselves that the people whom the Georgian authorities present to the international community as "forcibly displaced persons" in actual fact live in their own homes and have no restrictions on their rights, including the right to use their native tongue, to receive an education in the Georgian language, to move freely across the South Ossetian-Georgian State border, to communicate with relatives in Georgia and to move cargo and goods. The Georgian authorities are creating obstacles and prohibiting these people from bringing even one kilogram of Russian-made products from South Ossetia into Georgia.

South Ossetia calls for the important humanitarian issue of refugees to be depoliticized. The country's legislation does not permit any discrimination against citizens on the grounds of ethnicity or religion. The population of the Republic has equal access to government services without regard to ethnicity. There are schools in South Ossetia where pupils from the Georgian minority can receive their primary and secondary education in the Georgian language. Regardless of ethnicity, all citizens have the right to return to the country. At the same time, the direct exercise of this right will be determined to a large extent by the approach of the Georgian side to the issue of the ethnic Ossetians who were victims of ethnic cleansing by Georgia.

South Ossetia calls for a consistent and incremental solution to this problem in accordance with international law and taking into account the current situation in the region. These issues must be discussed in a forum at which Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia are all represented, so that balanced and truly valid decisions, including with regard to refugees, can be taken. The only forum at present is the platform provided by the Geneva discussions on security and stability in the South Caucasus. In the United Nations General Assembly, however, Georgia is politicizing the issue of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, and this is undermining the meaningful work on this issue conducted in Geneva. If Georgia prefers to bring the

discussion of the refugee question to an authoritative international body such as the United Nations General Assembly, then South Ossetia insists that its representatives should be given the opportunity to present their position to the States Members of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the South Ossetian side has been deprived of the opportunity for contact with the Main Committees of the General Assembly and with the delegations of States Members of the United Nations, as the United States State Department, abusing its position as the host country of the United Nations, refuses to grant entry into the United States to the official representatives of the Republic of South Ossetia.

We call on the States Members of the United Nations to address this discriminatory practice, which contradicts existing international norms, and take the necessary action to ensure that Ossetian representatives can enter the United States and have access to the United Nations Headquarters in New York so that they can present the position of the Republic of Ossetia on the refugee issue prior to the vote in the General Assembly on the issue of refugees from South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

April 2017



**General Assembly
Security Council**

Distr.: General
17 May 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 61
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-second year

**Letter dated 16 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to attach herewith the answer of the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to a question raised by the Korea Central News Agency on 16 May 2017 with regard to the successful test-fire of the ground-to-ground medium long-range strategic ballistic rocket, Hwasong-12 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Ja Song Nam**
Ambassador Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 16 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Answer of the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to a question raised by the Korea Central News Agency on 16 May 2017 with regard to the successful test-fire of a ground-to-ground medium long-range strategic ballistic rocket

The successful test-fire of Hwasong-12 is of great and special significance in ensuring peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the region, and it is the greatest victory of the Korean people.

As part of the routine work to raise the nuclear capability to the maximum and thus increase the military capability for self-defence, the test-fire was conducted at the highest angle, in consideration of neighbouring countries' security. It was aimed at verifying the tactical and technical specifications of the newly developed ballistic rocket capable of carrying a large-size heavy nuclear warhead.

However, some countries described this legitimate exercise of the right to self-defence as a "violation" and "threat", and the Security Council issued a press statement condemning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the ballistic rocket launch.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically and totally rejects the press statement, which called into question its bolstering of nuclear deterrence for the purpose of self-defence, pursuant to the vicious United States anti-Democratic People's Republic of Korea policy.

Just in one recent one week, the United States conducted two test-fires of intercontinental ballistic missiles, but the Security Council never mentioned them.

The right to self-defence is the first criterion of sovereignty. Therefore, an accusation against it is an undisguised encroachment upon sovereignty and an act of rude interference in internal affairs.

Should the United States dare to make a military provocation against our State, we will readily counter it.

The most perfect weapon systems in the world will never be the eternal, exclusive property of the United States and the day when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea uses corresponding retaliatory means is sure to come.

Then, the United States will come to see for itself whether the ballistic rockets of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea pose an actual threat to it or not.

**General Assembly**Distr.: General
19 May 2017

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Seventy-first session

Agenda item 34

The situation in the Middle East**Note verbale dated 25 April 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to transmit, on behalf of its Government in its capacity as Chair of the twenty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, two resolutions* adopted by the League of Arab States during the session:

- Resolution 683 on developments in the situation in the Republic of Yemen
- Resolution 687 on the occupation by Iran of the three Arab islands in the Arab Gulf belonging to the United Arab Emirates: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations requests the circulation of the present note verbale as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34.

* Previously issued in S/2017/333, annex.



**General Assembly
Security Council**Distr.: General
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**General Assembly
Seventy-first session**

Agenda item 34

The situation in the Middle East**Security Council
Seventy-second year****Identical notes verbales dated 26 April 2017 from the Permanent
Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the Security Council and has the honour to attach herewith (see annex), on behalf of its Government in its capacity as Chair of the twenty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, six resolutions adopted by the League of Arab States on 29 March 2017, namely:

- Resolution 679, entitled “Solidarity with and support for Lebanon”
- Resolution 680, entitled “Developments in the Syrian crisis”
- Resolution 681, entitled “The Syrian refugee crisis”
- Resolution 682, entitled “Developments in the situation in Libya”
- Resolution 688, entitled “Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Arab States”
- Resolution 689, entitled “Arab position on the violation by Turkish forces of the sovereignty of Iraq”

The Permanent Mission of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations requests the circulation of the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council, in connection with the item “The situation in the Middle East”.



Annex to the identical notes verbales dated 26 April 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

The question of Palestine and developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict

Solidarity with and support for Lebanon

The Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level,

Having considered:

- The note of the Secretariat,
- The report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action,
- The recommendation made by the group charged with following up on the implementation of resolutions and commitments at the ministerial level at its second meeting held in Amman on 27 March 2017,
- Resolution 7738 (141st ordinary session) dated 9 March 2014 on the negative and dangerous repercussions of the Syrian displaced person crisis for Lebanon,
- The resolutions of the Council at the ministerial level, the most recent of which was resolution 8117, adopted at the 147th ordinary session on 7 March 2017,

Reaffirming the resolutions of the Arab summit conferences, the most recent of which was the Nouakchott summit (2016), in particular resolution 599 (25th ordinary session) adopted on 26 March 2014 at the Kuwait summit, concerning support for the Lebanese Army,

Noting the latest domestic, regional and international developments concerning Lebanon,

Recalling the relevant international resolutions, to which the Lebanese Government remains committed, particularly the entirety of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which is based on Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978),

Decides

1. To welcome the election of General Michel Aoun as President of the Lebanese Republic, which marks a decisive step towards ensuring that Lebanon is able to address and overcome its pressing political, security, economic and social challenges and ensuring the proper functioning of Lebanese institutions in accordance with the Constitution; to welcome also the formation of a Government of national unity headed by Saad Hariri; to reaffirm full solidarity with Lebanon; to provide political and economic support to Lebanon, its Government and all of its constitutional institutions, in order to safeguard Lebanese national unity and Lebanon's security, stability and sovereignty over its entire territory; to emphasize the right of the Lebanese people to liberate or recover the Lebanese Shab'a Farms, the hills of Kafr Shuba and the Lebanese portion of the town of Ghajar; to uphold their right to use legitimate means to resist any aggression; and to emphasize the need to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance against Israeli occupation, as the latter is a right enshrined in international instruments and the principles of international law, and therefore cannot be considered an act of terrorism;

2. To support Lebanon's call on the international community to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which is based on resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), by putting a definitive end to Israel's violations and constant threats against Lebanon and its civilian facilities and infrastructure;
3. To welcome and endorse the conclusions adopted by the successive meetings of the International Support Group for Lebanon, the most recent of which was held on the margins of the seventieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 30 September 2015;
4. To commend the national role of the Lebanese Army and security forces in maintaining domestic stability and peace and supporting efforts to extend the sovereignty of the Lebanese State as far as its internationally recognized borders; to commend the sacrifices made by the Lebanese Army in its fight against terrorism and terrorist and takfirist organizations, particularly those mentioned in Security Council resolution 2170 (2014); to condemn the reprehensible attacks against several areas of Lebanon; to welcome the assistance provided to Lebanon by friendly countries, particularly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; to urge all States to strengthen the capacity of the Lebanese Army to fulfil its responsibilities, as it is the cornerstone of security, stability and civil peace in Lebanon; and to condemn the abduction of Lebanese soldiers by terrorist organizations in August 2014 and demand their release in order to thwart the schemes of those wishing to ignite domestic and regional strife;
5. To condemn all of the terrorist acts, armed deployments and terrorist bombings that have targeted several areas of Lebanon, killing many innocent civilians; to reject all futile attempts to sow discord, undermine the foundations of coexistence, civil peace and national unity and disrupt security and stability; to emphasize the need to combat extremism, fanaticism, takfirism, sectarianism and interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon; to cooperate and coordinate fully in order to counter and eradicate terrorism, and eliminate its sources of funding; to cooperate in sharing information and expertise, and building capacity; and holding accountable the perpetrators of terrorist acts and crimes against humanity and those who incite violent and destructive acts and sectarianism, which endanger peace and security, and to tighten sanctions against them and take preventive measures in that regard;
6. To support the steadfast resistance of Lebanon to the ongoing Israeli aggression, including, in particular, the July 2006 aggression; to pray for God's mercy on the souls of the Lebanese victims; to stress that the Lebanese people's cohesion and unity in confronting and resisting the Israeli aggression are a guarantee of the country's future, security and stability; to characterize Israeli crimes as war crimes whose perpetrators must be prosecuted; to hold Israel fully responsible for its attacks and to compel it to compensate the Lebanese Republic and its citizens; to welcome United Nations General Assembly resolutions concerning the oil slick on Lebanese shores, the most recent being resolution 71/218 of 21 December 2016, which requires Israel to provide financial compensation for the damage caused to Lebanon when Israel bombed the Jiyeh electric power plant during the July 2006 war;
7. To condemn Israeli land, sea and air violations of Lebanese sovereignty, including:
 - The Israeli penetration of Lebanese society through the planting of agents and propagation of espionage networks;
 - Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereign and economic rights in its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone and its oil and gas resources located in its

maritime areas, as well the recent threats that Israel made in writing following the opening of the exploration licensing round;

- The all-out electronic warfare that Israel is waging against the Lebanese Republic, as evidenced by the noticeable increase in the number of towers, antennas and devices for observation, spying and surveillance, all of which are intended for piracy and espionage against all Lebanese communication and data networks;
- Israel's refusal to hand over complete, accurate information and maps pertaining to the locations of all unexploded ordnance, including the quantity and the types of cluster bombs that it dropped indiscriminately on populated civilian areas during its attack on Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

8. To underscore the following points:

- There is a need to safeguard Lebanon's unique pluralistic formula, which is based on equality between Muslims and Christians, religious coexistence, dialogue, tolerance and mutual acceptance; to condemn its polar opposite, namely, the nihilist terrorist organizations, whose crimes against humanity mimic Israel's exclusionary policies based on the Jewish character of the State and its hostile actions against Muslims and Christians;
- Lebanese constitutional institutions must be supported in their policy of promoting Lebanon's Arab and international presence and spreading its message of cultural diversity, particularly in confronting Israel; minorities must remain indigenous and fundamental components of the social fabric of the States in the region; minority rights must be safeguarded and attacks against minorities prevented; and crimes committed against minorities must be characterized as crimes against humanity;
- The constitutional institutions of Lebanon must be supported in complying with their constitutional obligation to reject resettlement and uphold the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes; and the Palestinian people and leadership deserve credit for their unequivocal and consistent rejection of the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in host countries, particularly in Lebanon. States and international organizations must shoulder fully their responsibilities and contribute regularly and without interruption to the funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. They must also provide further funding for the reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared camp, pay to the Treasury of the Lebanese State the sums owed for electricity and infrastructure depletion and compensate private property owners on whose land in Lebanese territory temporary camps were established;
- The Lebanese Government complies with the authoritative international resolutions and is striving to uncover the truth regarding the assassination of the late Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and members of his entourage, and it is doing so without politicization or reprisal and in a manner that would not adversely affect the stability, unity and civil peace of Lebanon;
- The Lebanese Government must be supported in its efforts to follow up on the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr and his two associates, Sheikh Muhammad Ya'qub and the journalist Abbas Badrudin, in order to free them, to hold accountable officials of the former Libyan regime, and to close the case.

9. To welcome the following:

- The reaffirmation by the President of the Republic in his inauguration speech of the unified position of the Lebanese people and of his commitment to the country's domestic tranquillity, which protects it against the fire that is raging

around it in the region. The Council also welcomes the commitment he made to respect the charter of the League of Arab States, in particular article 8 thereof, and welcomes the adoption by Lebanon of an independent foreign policy that is founded on the supreme interest of Lebanon and respect for international law;

- The efforts of the Lebanese Government and people, despite the country's limited resources, to host displaced Syrians; to emphasize the need to assist Lebanon in that regard, to share the burden, including the numbers of refugees involved, and to stem the growth of the problem; to emphasize that the presence of those displaced persons in Lebanon is temporary, in the light of Lebanon's categorical rejection of absorption of refugees into the societies of the host countries and its desire for this issue to be given top priority in any proposals to resolve the Syrian crisis given the existential threat that it poses to the country; to make every effort to ensure their safe return to their homes as soon as possible, which is the only sustainable solution to the Syrian refugee problem in Lebanon; to commend the Lebanese Government's intensive efforts to reduce the number of displaced Syrians in Lebanon and to guarantee the security of both Lebanese and Syrians; and to reduce the burden borne by the Lebanese people and economy, as Lebanon finds itself on the brink of a social, economic and security cataclysm that endangers its very existence;
- The initiative taken by Lebanon to appeal to the International Criminal Court prosecutor to bring charges in respect of Israel's war crimes in Gaza and the ongoing crimes against humanity committed by terrorists in Iraq;
- The efforts of the Lebanese Government to consolidate macroeconomic stability and maintain monetary stability, and the commitment of the Government to act immediately to address the chronic problems that afflict all Lebanese;
- The vision of the Lebanese Government, which links economic growth to the improvement and expansion of the social safety net, health care and education for all Lebanese;
- The initiation of measures by the Government in connection with the licensing round for oil exploration and extraction and the promulgation of the necessary implementing decrees;
- The efforts of the Lebanese Government to build a State of law and institutions by setting out an overall national strategy for countering corruption, strengthening the independence of the judiciary, reinvigorating the supervisory agencies and enhancing the role played by women political and public life;
- The tireless and ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in support of the Lebanese Republic, in consultation with the Arab States, Lebanese constitutional institutions and various political forces, with a view to enhancing stability and promoting sustainable economic growth in Lebanon, which will safeguard the unity, security and stability of country, and enable it to address threats.

(Resolution 679 — 28th ordinary session — third meeting — 29 March 2017)

Developments in the Syrian crisis

The Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level,

Having considered:

- The note of the Secretariat,
- The report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action,
- The recommendation made by the group charged with following up on the implementation of resolutions and commitments at the ministerial level at its second meeting held in Amman on 27 March 2017,

Recalling previous resolutions of the League of Arab States at the summit level, including resolution 554 of the Baghdad summit (23rd ordinary session) dated 29 March 2012, resolution 580 of the Doha summit (24th ordinary session) dated 26 March 2013, resolution 600 of the Kuwait summit (25th ordinary session) dated 26 March 2014, resolution 623 of the Sharm e'-Sheikh, Egypt, summit (26th ordinary session) dated 29 March 2015 and resolution 646 of the Nouakchott summit (27th ordinary session) dated 25 July 2016; the resolutions of the Council at the ministerial level in that regard, of which the most recent was resolution 8120 (147th ordinary session) dated 7 March 2017; resolution 8106 of the Council (extraordinary session) dated 19 December 2016; resolution 8105 of the Council at the permanent representative level (extraordinary session) dated 15 December 2016; and the statements of the ministerial committee on the situation in Syria,

Reiterating its total solidarity with the Syrian people in the face of the serious violations perpetrated against them, which threaten their existence and the lives of innocent civilians,

Reaffirming its full commitment to supporting the aspirations of the Syrian people for freedom, justice and equality, and their inalienable right to choose a system of governance that will enable them to realize their hopes and aspirations to establish peace and security throughout Syria,

Welcoming again the efforts of the International Syria Support Group to create conditions conducive to the resumption of negotiations between the opposition and the Syrian Government towards the formation of a transitional governing body with full executive authority, in accordance with the communiqué of the first Geneva conference of 30 June 2012; the two statements issued by the Support Group at Vienna on 30 October 2015 and 14 November 2015, both of which were endorsed by Security Council resolution 2254 (2015); the Group's Munich statement of 11 February 2016, which was endorsed by Security Council resolution 2268 (2016); and the Group's Vienna statement of 17 May 2016, all of which seek to fulfil the aspirations of all Syrian groups and factions,

Decides

1. To reiterate its abiding commitment to preserving the sovereignty, unity, stability and territorial integrity of Syria, based on the Charter of the League of Arab States and its principles;
2. To reiterate its firm position that the only possible solution to the Syrian crisis is a political solution achieved through an inclusive political process that meets the aspirations of the Syrian people, in accordance with the communiqué of the first Geneva conference dated 30 June 2012 and the resolutions adopted and communiqués issued in that regard, particularly Security Council resolution 2254 (2015); to welcome the resumption of the Geneva discussions on 23 February 2017 under the aegis of the United Nations; and to call upon the League of Arab States to

cooperate with the United Nations in order to ensure the success of the United Nations-sponsored Syrian negotiations aimed at ending the conflict and establishing peace and stability in Syria;

3. To express its profound concern at the effects of ongoing military action in a number of parts of Syria, despite the cessation of hostilities agreement that was concluded on 29 December 2016; to call upon the actors that have not implemented the above-mentioned agreement to abide by the arrangements aimed at reinforcing the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions; to welcome Security Council resolution 2336 (2016) of 31 December 2016, which calls for a ceasefire in Syria, and international efforts to consolidate the ceasefire, which is an important step towards achieving a political solution in accordance with the communiqué of the first Geneva conference and Security Council resolution 2254 (2015); and to take note of the efforts being made at the Astana meetings to consolidate the ceasefire;

4. To urge the International Syria Support Group to redouble its efforts and continue striving to implement the communiqué of the first Geneva conference dated 30 June 2012, the statements issued by the Support Group at Vienna on 30 October and 14 November 2015 and 17 May 2016, and the Munich statement of 11 February 2016, and to work for compliance with the principles and mechanisms agreed to and set forth in those statements, in particular those mechanisms that pertain to reinforcing the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, and providing humanitarian assistance, and to create an atmosphere conducive to the successful conclusion of the negotiations being conducted in Geneva under the aegis of the United Nations with a view to the formation of a transitional governing body with full executive authorities;

5. To condemn and reject the Syrian regime's atrocities against the defenceless civilian population in Aleppo and its countryside, and against Syrian citizens in all parts of Syria; and to regard the ongoing aerial bombardments, massacres and crimes committed by the regime in Aleppo and other Syrian cities as a blatant violation of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law;

6. To condemn terrorist operations and crimes committed against civilians in various parts of Syria by such terrorist organizations and groups as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusra Front, which is affiliated with Al-Qaida, and other terrorist organizations;

7. To request the Group of Arab States in Geneva to coordinate closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take all necessary measures to halt the ongoing human rights violations being perpetrated by the Syrian regime, including by providing the necessary protection to children and women, and preventing hospitals and civilian institutions from being targeted, in accordance with international humanitarian law;

8. To welcome the positive outcomes of the expanded meeting of the Syrian opposition held under the aegis of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on 8 and 9 December 2015, and previous meetings of the Syrian opposition parties in Cairo and Moscow aimed at consolidating the Syrian opposition's vision of steps needed for a political solution to the Syrian crisis through a Syrian-led political process on the basis of the communiqué of the first Geneva conference, the statements of the International Syria Support Group and the relevant Security Council resolutions;

9. To commend His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, and the State of Kuwait, for hosting the first, second and third donor conferences in support of the humanitarian situation in Syria held in Kuwait in 2013, 2014 and 2015, and participating in the fourth conference held in

London in 2016, in the course of which it has contributed a total of \$1.6 billion; to welcome the role of Kuwait, which has taken it upon itself to play a leading role in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis, in organizing the fifth donor conference in support of the humanitarian situation in Syria, which is set to be held in April 2017 in Brussels under the aegis of the European Union; and to call on donor States to fulfil promptly the pledges made at the London conference in support of the humanitarian situation in Syria, in particular those related to providing the necessary support to Syria's neighbouring Arab States and other Arab States that are hosting Syria refugees and displaced persons, in order to help them bear the burdens of providing relief and urgent humanitarian aid;

10. To request the Secretary-General of the League to continue consultations and contacts with the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Syria, and with the relevant stakeholders, to intensify efforts to create a climate conducive to the resumption of the Geneva rounds of negotiations aimed at determining the steps needed for a transitional political solution to the Syrian crisis, in accordance with the communiqué of the first Geneva Conference dated 30 June 2012, the statements of the International Syria Support Group, and the relevant Security Council resolutions;

11. To request the ministerial committee on Syria and the Secretary-General to continue efforts and consultations on the situation in Syria with the relevant regional and international parties, and to report on the outcomes of those efforts at the next session of the Council of the League at ministerial level.

(Resolution 680 — 28th ordinary session — third meeting — 29 March 2017)

— Lebanon stresses the policy of non-involvement in internal conflicts in brotherly Arab States, and calls for the adoption of consensual political solutions, in order to preserve the unity, sovereignty and stability of the Arab States and to fulfil the aspirations of their peoples.

The Syrian refugee crisis

The Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level,

- Having considered the note of the Secretariat,
- Based on resolutions of the Council at various levels,
- In the light of the political, security and social implications of the ongoing crisis in Syria, which affect and continue to place burdens on Syria's neighbouring States and the other Arab States hosting Syrian refugees,
- Expressing its utmost appreciation for the aid operations and humanitarian assistance provided by Arab and other States at the governmental and popular levels, which have contributed greatly to alleviating the suffering of our Syrian brothers both inside Syria and in refugee camps in Arab States,

Decides

1. To charge the Council of the League at the ministerial level with putting in place a specific mechanism to assist the Arab States neighbouring Syria and other Arab States hosting Syrian refugees and persons forcibly displaced to those States, in order to enable them to manage the various burdens entailed by hosting those refugees;
2. To underscore that the presence of Syrian refugees on the territories of the host States is temporary, and that conditions must be created for their return to their home countries as soon as possible through collective action to rehabilitate those refugees so that they can take part in rebuilding their countries and overcoming difficulties and obstacles left behind by years of war;
3. To urge the international community, and in particular donor countries and institutions, to carry out their responsibilities and provide more support to States hosting Syrian refugees, in order to keep pace with the magnitude of the burdens being borne by those States.

(Resolution 681 — 28th ordinary session — third meeting — 29 March 2017)

Developments in the situation in the State of Libya

The Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level,

Having considered:

- The note of the Secretariat,
- The report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action,
- Resolution 647 (27th ordinary session), adopted on 25 July 2016 at the Nouakchott summit,
- The previous resolutions of the Council at the ministerial level on this topic, the most recent of which was resolution 8121, adopted at the 147th ordinary session on 7 March 2017,
- The recommendation made by the group charged with following up on the implementation of resolutions and commitments at the ministerial level at its second meeting held in Amman on 27 March 2017,

Reaffirming the need to honour the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya; protect its citizens; preserve its political independence; and reject foreign and military intervention in Libyan affairs,

Decides

1. To reaffirm the need to honour the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya; to reject any foreign intervention unless it is done pursuant to the request of and in coordination with the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord; and to express its deep concern about the proliferation of the activities of terrorist groups in Libya;
2. To reaffirm the Joint Communiqué on Libya of 22 September 2016 issued on the margins of the seventy-first session of the United Nations General Assembly;
3. To call for a political solution to the crisis in Libya achieved through inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation, as the only way out of this crisis; to reaffirm the Council's support for full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement signed in Skhirat on 17 December 2015; and to categorically reject a military solution, which would have a negative impact on the security and stability of Libya;
4. To reiterate its support for the political dialogue being conducted under the aegis of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Libya and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the League of Arab States;
5. To call for the lifting of the freeze on Libyan funds held in foreign banks and all other frozen Libyan assets, which belong to the Libyan people and should be used for their benefit and to meet their needs at such time as the Presidency Council deems appropriate, in accordance with paragraph 18 of Security Council resolution 1970 (2011) and paragraph 20 of Security Council resolution 1973 (2011);
6. To call for political and material support to be provided to the Presidency Council of the Libyan Government of National Accord, as the sole legitimate Government of Libya, and for support for and communications with parallel institutions to be refrained from; and to call on States to provide urgent assistance for the full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, to provide support for the rehabilitation of civilian, military and national institutions operating under the leadership of the Presidency Council, to provide those institutions with expertise and tools in areas identified by the Presidency Council of the Government of

National Accord as essential to carrying out its pressing responsibilities, and to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, of which the most recent were resolutions 2259 (2015) and 2278 (2016);

7. To express deep concern over the security challenges and terrorist threats faced by Libya, and to urge the consolidation of Libyan forces under the civilian leadership of the Presidential Council as the only way to restore stability and peace to Libya;

8. To call on the Presidency Council, the House of Representatives, the Central Bank of Libya and other Libyan national economic institutions to work together towards agreement on implementing solutions to Libya's economic problems; to take note of the communiqué on Libya issued in Rome on 17 November 2016; to reaffirm relevant Council resolutions on the illegal export of petroleum, emphasizing that Libyan oil facilities and resources must be kept out of any military conflicts so that the Libyan National Oil Corporation in Tripoli can carry out its responsibilities with respect to all oil facilities in Libya; and to support the measures necessary to strengthen the authority of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord over Libyan economic institutions, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2259 (2015);

9. To commend the role played by Libya's neighbouring States, who are the most affected by instability in Libya, and to invite them to continue to provide assistance for a United Nations-sponsored political settlement in Libya that preserves its unity and territorial integrity, protects its citizens and achieves security and stability, in coordination with the Presidency Council of the Libyan Government of National Accord;

10. To emphasize the role of the League of Arab States; to take note of the expansion of the troika proposed by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to coordinate the efforts of the League, the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union; to take note of the joint communiqué issued by the most recent meeting of that mechanism held on 18 March 2017, with a view to advancing efforts under the aegis of the United Nations, implementing the Libyan Political Agreement and supporting the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord in addressing political, security and economic challenges;

11. To take note of the significant outcomes of the meeting of the African Union Commission's High-level Committee on Libya, held in Brazzaville on 27 January 2017, including its decision to expand its membership to include Libya's neighbouring States with a view to advancing United Nations efforts to resolve the crisis in Libya;

12. To commend the outcomes of the tenth ministerial meeting of Libya's neighbouring States held in Cairo on 21 January 2017, as well as previous meetings of neighbouring States held in Tunis, Algiers, Khartoum, Cairo, N'Djamena, Niamey and Malabo, and the eleventh meeting to be held in Algiers at the end of April 2017;

13. To express its appreciation and support for the initiative of President Béji Caïd Essebsi of the Republic of Tunisia aimed at achieving a political solution through inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation in Libya, which, following the Tunis Declaration adopted by the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt on 19 and 20 February 2017, became a tripartite initiative in support of a comprehensive political settlement in Libya that creates conditions conducive to bringing together all the Libyan parties in a Libyan-Libyan national dialogue under United Nations auspices and based on the Libyan Political

Agreement signed in Skhirat on 17 December 2015, which provides a frame of reference for a political settlement of the Libyan crisis;

14. To call on States members to contribute actively to improving the deteriorating humanitarian situation by providing assistance to the Libyan people and supporting the emergency humanitarian response plan for Libya put in place by the United Nations in coordination with the Government of National Accord;

15. To request the Secretary-General to continue contacts and consultations with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Libya, all Libyan parties and Libya's neighbouring States, and to emphasize the role of the League of Arab States, in order to overcome remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement.

(Resolution 682 — 28th ordinary session — third meeting — 29 March 2017)

Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Arab States

The Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level,

Having considered:

- The note of the Secretariat,
- The report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action,
- The recommendation made by the group charged with following up on the implementation of resolutions and commitments at the ministerial level at its second meeting held in Amman on 27 March 2017,
- The press release issued by the fifth meeting of the meeting of the quadripartite Arab ministerial committee tasked with following up on the crisis with Iran, held in Amman on 27 March 2017,

Reaffirming resolution 652 (25 July 2015) of the Council at the summit level, as well as previous statements and resolutions adopted by the Council at the ministerial level on this topic, the most recent of which was resolution 8124 dated 7 March 2017 on Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Arab States,

Having heard the statements made by the heads of delegations and the Secretary-General,

Decides

1. To emphasize that cooperative relations between the Arab States and the Islamic Republic of Iran must be based on the principles of good-neighbourly relations and refraining from the use or threat of force; denounce Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Arab States, as that is a violation of the norms of international law and the principles of good-neighbourly relations and State sovereignty; and call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to refrain from taking provocative actions that undermine confidence-building and threaten security and stability in the region;
2. To reaffirm its condemnation of the breach of the inviolability of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Tehran and its Consulate-General in Mashhad, to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran responsible for the incidents, and to demand that it comply with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963);
3. To condemn and deplore the inflammatory and hostile statements that Iranian officials continue to make against Arab States, and to call on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to cease making hostile statements or taking provocative actions and to halt media campaigns against Arab States, as such conduct is blatant interference in the internal affairs of those States;
4. To call on Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to end policies that exacerbate sectarian and confessional conflict and to refrain from supporting groups that promote such conflict in the States of the Arabian Gulf; and to demand that the Iranian Government should bring an end to its support for armed militias and parties within Arab States;
5. To condemn Iran's ongoing occupation of the three islands of the United Arab Emirates (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa); and to express its support for all peaceful means and measures chosen by the United Arab Emirates to restore its sovereignty over the islands which, according to international law, are under occupation;

6. To condemn and denounce Iran's ongoing interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain by supporting terrorism, training terrorists and smuggling arms and explosives; provoking sectarian strife; making statements at various levels to undermine security, order and stability; and establishing terrorist groups in Bahrain that are financed and trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the terrorist Hizbullah party, as such conduct is contrary to the principles of good-neighbourly relations and non-interference in internal affairs set out in the Charter of the United Nations and prescribed by international law;
7. To commend the efforts of the security services of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which were able to thwart a terrorist plan in January 2016 and arrest the members of the terrorist organization that was meant to carry out the plan. That organization, which is supported by the so-called Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the terrorist Hizbullah party, was planning to commit a series of grave terrorist acts throughout Bahrain;
8. To denounce Iran's intervention in the Syrian crisis, which has had serious repercussions for the future of Syria and its sovereignty, security, stability, national unity and territorial integrity, and to emphasize that such intervention is detrimental to efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis through peaceful means in accordance with the first Geneva conference;
9. To denounce Iran's intervention in the internal affairs of Yemen and its backing of forces opposed to the legitimate Government of Yemen, a stance that has affected the security and stability of Yemen, neighbouring countries and the region as a whole;
10. To stress the importance of the initiative of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf contained in the letter from His Highness the Emir of the State of Kuwait to the President of Iran; and to call on Iran to engage constructively with that initiative with a view to strengthening security and stability in the region;
11. To underline the need for Iran to comply with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015); the need for effective mechanisms to put in place to verify compliance with the relevant agreement, conduct inspections and carry out oversight functions; the need for sanctions to be promptly and effectively reimposed should Iran fail to fulfil its obligations under the agreement; and the importance of Iran becoming a party to all regional treaties on nuclear safety and environmental protection;
12. To request the Secretary-General to continue coordinating with the Foreign Ministers of the quadripartite Arab committee composed of the United Arab Emirates (Chair), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, with a view to continuing to develop an Arab action plan to respond to Iranian interventions in the Arab region; and mobilizing international support for Arab opposition to Iran's interventions;
13. To include an item entitled "Iranian interventions in the internal affairs of Arab States" on the agendas of Arab platforms of cooperation with international and regional groupings;
14. To request the relevant organs of the United Nations to include the question of Iranian interventions in the internal affairs of Arab States on their respective agendas, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Article 2, paragraph 7, which prohibits interference in the internal affairs of States;

15. To request the Secretary-General of the League to monitor implementation of the present resolution and report to the Council at its next ordinary session.

(Resolution 688 — 28th ordinary session — third meeting — 29 March 2017)

- The position of the Republic of Iraq regarding the resolution on Iranian interventions in the internal affairs of Arab States, adopted by the Council of the League at the summit level and at the ministerial level at previous meetings:
 1. Iraq expresses its reservations regarding the title of the resolution
 2. Iraq completely rejects paragraph 6 and 7 of the resolution because it supports the honourable national opposition, namely, the Lebanese Hizbullah party, which is part of the Lebanese Government that represents the Lebanese people.
- The position of the Lebanese Republic: Lebanon expresses its reservations regarding paragraphs 6 and 7, because they refer to Hizbullah as a terrorist party. This designation is unacceptable because it is not sanctioned by the United Nations and is contrary to the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, particularly in view of the distinction made between resistance and terrorism. Hizbullah is a key player in Lebanon and represents a large number of Lebanese. It also has substantial representation in Parliament, the ministries and the constitutional institutions of Lebanon. We support the other paragraphs of the resolution, although some of them infringe on the policy of non involvement adopted by the Lebanese Government, particularly paragraph 2, which condemns the breach of the inviolability of the missions of Saudi Arabia in Iran. We condemn any intervention in the internal affairs of Arab States. We have requested that the phrase “terrorist Hizbullah party” should be deleted from both paragraphs, so that we might be able to endorse the entire resolution without any reservations.
- The People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria: In order to confront the mounting threat posed by terrorist organizations, Algeria calls for the international community to coordinate its efforts to combat such organizations in the context of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and on the basis of common goals. The international community should also follow the rules of international law, particularly by adhering to United Nations bulletins and lists with regard to the designation of terrorist groups, which do not include political parties that are recognized at the national and international levels, and that contribute to national political and social life. All actors, whether Governments or parties, must not interfere in the internal affairs of States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the League of Arab States.
- Note of the Republic of Tunisia: With regard to paragraphs 6 and 7 of the resolution, Tunisia recalls the position it expressed during the 145th, 146th and 147th ordinary meetings of Council at the ministerial level and the 27th ordinary session of the Council at the summit level, which stresses the following:
 - Tunisia rejects all forms of interference in the internal affairs of States and all practices that threaten the security and stability of the region. Tunisia strongly supports the security of the security of its fellow Arab States of the Gulf, and calls for all parties to resolve their difference through dialogue and peaceful means, and for adherence to the values of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence.
 - Tunisia stresses that Hizbullah’s contribution to the liberation of part of Lebanese territory from Israeli occupation does not give it or any other party the right to take any actions that jeopardize the security and stability of the region.

Arab position on the violation by Turkish forces of the sovereignty of Iraq

The Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level.

Having considered:

- The note of the Secretariat;
- The report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action;
- The recommendation made by the group charged with following up on the implementation of resolutions and commitments at the ministerial level at its second meeting held in Amman on 27 March 2017.

Reaffirming all resolutions of the League Council at Ministerial level, the most recent of which was resolution 8125 (147th ordinary session) dated 7 March 2017, and resolutions at the summit level, the most recent of which was resolution 653 (27th ordinary session) adopted at the Nouakchott summit on 25 July 2016,

Decides

1. To reaffirm the provisions of resolution 7987 of the Council of the League at the ministerial level, adopted by the Council at its extraordinary session on 24 December 2015, condemning the incursion of Turkish forces into Iraqi territory, which is a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and a threat to Arab security, and demanding that the Turkish Government withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally;
2. To call on the States members of the League, in their bilateral relations, to request the Turkish Government to withdraw its forces from Iraqi territory in implementation of resolution 7987 of the Council of the League, adopted at its extraordinary session of 24 December 2015, and to raise the matter in its communications with States members;
3. To call on States members to request the Turkish Government to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq and to stop taking such provocative actions, which undermine confidence-building and threaten the security and stability of the region;
4. To reiterate its support for the Iraqi Government in any measures it may take in accordance with the relevant principles of international law to ensure that the Turkish Government withdraws its forces from Iraqi territory, with a view to consolidating the sovereignty of the Government of Iraq over its entire territory;
5. To underscore the need for the continued inclusion of a standing agenda item entitled "Incursion of Turkish forces into Iraqi territory and halting Turkish interference in neighbouring Arab countries" in the agenda of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level until such time as those forces have fully withdrawn;
6. To request that the Secretary-General of the League continue to follow up on the implementation of resolution 7987 of the Council of the League, adopted at the extraordinary session of 24 December 2015, and to submit a detailed report to the Council at its next ordinary session;

7. To reiterate that the Arab member of the Security Council, the Arab Republic of Egypt, should continue to press for the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Iraqi territory and take all necessary measures until such time as those forces have fully withdrawn.

(Resolution 689 — 28th ordinary session — third meeting — 29 March 2017)

- The United Arab Emirates enters a reservation to the present resolution.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain enters a reservation to the present resolution.
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enters a reservation to the present resolution.
- The State of Qatar enters a reservation to the present resolution.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 May 2017

Original: English

Seventy-first session

Agenda items 19 and 73 (a)

Sustainable development

Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Accreditation and participation of intergovernmental organizations in the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has received requests for accreditation from the following organizations to participate as intergovernmental organizations in the work of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, with observer status, in accordance with paragraph 15 of annex II to General Assembly resolution 70/303:

International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

International Whaling Commission

Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States
Bordering the Atlantic Ocean

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization

Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center





**General Assembly
Security Council**

Distr.: General
19 May 2017
English
Original: Russian

**General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 31
Prevention of armed conflict**

**Security Council
Seventy-second year**

**Letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith information on the work of the "White Helmets" in Syria (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) P. Illichev
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

17-08181 (E) 230517 300517



Please recycle



**Annex to the letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires
a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: English]

**EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EXTREMISM,
CAMBRIDGE**

"Syria – Six Years On: From Destruction to Reconstruction.

**THE WHITE HELMETS: FACT OR FICTION –
INTERVENTION BY VANESSA BEELEY 5/4/2017**

SLIDE ONE INFOGRAPH

My name is Vanessa Beeley. I am an independent investigative journalist, writer and photographer based in France. I contribute regularly to various independent media sites such as 21st Century Wire, the Ron Paul Institute, Global research, Mint Press. In 2016 I spent a total of three months in Syria, including Aleppo in August and then in December following in the tracks of the SAA as they liberated East Aleppo from the Nusra Front led armed militant and extremist occupation.

For the last two years I have been conducting an ongoing investigation into the White Helmets, the much promoted, so called, Syrian humanitarian NGO that has recently achieved Hollywood fame through the Oscar, awarded to the Netflix documentary, showcasing White Helmet exploits in Syria. This investigation culminated in my going to Syria to expand my enquiries and research on the ground inside Syria.

Who are the White Helmets according to the White Helmets, created in 2013 [1]

1: *"a neutral, impartial humanitarian NGO, with no official affiliation to any political or military actor and a commitment to render services to any in need regardless of sect or political affiliation"*

2: Motto is "To save one life is to save all humanity" so non-sectarian and operating without bias

3: They are unarmed

4: They have saved 82,000 lives since they began working in Syria from end of 2013/early 2014

5: They are Syrian and the impression is given that the White Helmets are the primary USAR organisation operating inside Syria

My in-depth investigation into the legitimacy of these claims have raised some very disturbing anomalies, that have never been identified or raised by the mainstream media in the UK, EU or US, with some very minor exceptions. Why not? I will now run through my findings but I must emphasize that I am far from being alone in raising the following concerns, many of my colleagues in independent media and NGOs fostering peaceful resolution to the Syrian conflict have conducted their own analysis and drawn very similar conclusions:

1: The White Helmets receive funding from UK Foreign Office, curiously through the Conflict, Stability and Security fund for NON-HUMANITARIAN AID [2]

"the total value of funds committed between June 2013 and the end of the current financial year (31 March 2016) is £19.7m" in a statement made by the Foreign & Commonwealth office [3]

At the end of September 2016 Boris Johnson pledged a further £32m.

The US has funded the WH a disclosed \$23m via their USAID/Chemonics networks this was admitted by Mark Toner of the US State Dept. [4]

A look at various other EU government websites, reveal that:

Holland (\$4.5m), Germany (\$7.87m) Japan (undisclosed sum from the Intl Cooperation Agency), Denmark (undisclosed sum). The White Helmets also receive equipment and supplies from various EU member states.

This funding is concealed behind the generic heading of "Emergency Health and Relief Support to the Population Affected by the Crisis in Syria", through the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO), formerly known as the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. [5]

More recently Qatar has also confirmed funding of the White Helmets. Qatar is known to be funding many of the extremist factions operating inside Syria.

All governments funding the White Helmets have publicly declared an interest in removing President Assad and effecting "regime change" in Syria and must surely compromise their proclaimed neutrality.

2: The White Helmets were established in **Turkey**, *not* in Syria. They are largely trained in Turkey and Jordan, not inside Syria. They were established in March 2013 by a British ex-military officer, James Le Mesurier with \$300k seed funding from Japan, the U.K., and the U.S. [6]

3: The White Helmets are embedded exclusively in areas of Syria occupied by listed terrorist organisations including Nusra Front and ISIS, along with various associated 'moderate rebels' such as Ahrar al Sham and Nour Al Din Zinki. All these groups & sub-groups are responsible for carrying out ethnic cleansing pogroms and documented atrocities against the Syrian people. Nour Al Din Zinki videoed themselves beheading 12 year-old Palestinian child, Abdullah Issa in July 2016. Like the White Helmets, the majority of these armed groups receive funding, training, equipment and support from the United States and its Coalition partners, particularly the Gulf states. A fact that is extensively documented. [7]

4: During the situation in Madaya, Syria in January 2016, the White Helmets in Idlib were photographed attending demonstrations & carrying banners that were calling for the "burning and destruction" of the towns of Kafarya and Foua. These are two Idlib villages under full siege by Ahrar Al Sham & Nusra Front (Al Qaeda in Syria) since March 2015, partial siege since 2012. The siege ensures the starvation of villagers and daily shelling and sniping by Ahrar Al Sham and Nusra Front has killed over 1750 civilians during this time.

SLIDE TWO: KAFARYA AND FOUA

5: There is video and photographic evidence available that clearly shows the White Helmets participating in Nusra Front operations in the areas occupied or taken over by this organisation. There is one particularly damning video taken during the Nusra Front violent and brutal attack on Idlib City in March 2015. In this video White Helmet operatives are seen clearly beating a Syrian civilian prisoner of Nusra Front

and circling the prisoner, mingling with heavily armed and hostile Nusra Front militia. [8]

6: May 5th 2015 the White Helmets were filmed "clearing up" after a Nusra Front execution of a civilian prisoner in Northern Aleppo. Although the official statement from the White Helmets claims they arrived after the execution, the speed with which they appear (in video) immediately after the prisoner has been shot in the head, demonstrates clearly that they were on the scene and did nothing to prevent it. [9]

SLIDE THREE EXECUTION

7: Various other White Helmet operatives have posted videos of the torture and execution of Syrian Arab Army prisoners or to their social media pages with celebratory comments. One such operative, **Muawiya Hassan Agha**, is alleged to have been "sacked" from the White Helmets, for his participation in one such execution of 2 SAA prisoners of war in Khan Touman, S Aleppo May 2016, a clear violation of all ethics surrounding an "impartial" NGO. However, despite various demands, an official statement has never been issued by the White Helmets. Neither have they publicly condemned the torture and execution of prisoners of war, an act that contravenes the Geneva Convention. Within 3 weeks of his alleged sacking, Agha appeared in White Helmet photographs as one of their photographers. [10]

8: The leader of the White Helmets, Raed Saleh, was deported from Dulles Airport in the US, April 2016. No real explanation was ever given for this decision. Mark Toner of the US State Department fielded questions from media but did (i) Admit to funding the group with \$ 23m and (ii) suggest that Raed Saleh might have "extremist connections". Raed Saleh has recently been allowed back into the US in September 2016 and spoke at the UN New York with the Dutch Mission, he was involved in the closed sessions with Syrian activists and then secretary of State, John Kerry, published by the NYT. [11]

8a: While on the subject of Raed Saleh, who is the leader and global representative of the White Helmets, he is a close colleague of another White Helmet leader in Khan Sheikhou, Idlib, Mustafa Al Haj Yussef. Yussef has been with the WH since 2013 and is photographed in Idlib with Raed Saleh. Yussef's social media accounts reveal the following: [12]

SLIDE FOUR RAED SALEH & YUSSEF

- He has called for the unity of extremist factions such as Nusra Front and Ahrar al Sham
- He has clearly professed allegiance and support for Ahrar Al Sham, responsible for the massacres in the Alawite village of Al Zaraq May 2016
- He publicly calls for the shelling of civilians in Damascus during the 2014 elections.
- He advocates the extreme of executing civilians during Ramadan if they fail to fast
- He endorses the looting of SAA houses after their capture or execution which he also publicly calls for.

If the head of the Red Cross were committing such ethical breaches, we would surely be calling for a full investigation.

SLIDE FIVE REAL SYRIA CIVIL DEFENCE

9: The White Helmets are also referred to as the 'Syria Civil Defence.' However, there is an existing Syria Civil Defence. **The REAL Syria Civil Defence was established in Syria in 1953.** I met with crews in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous and Damascus during my four weeks in Syria. The REAL Syria Civil Defence were founder members of the ICDO [International Civil Defence Organisation] which is affiliated with the UN, WHO, OCHA, Red Cross, Red Crescent. The REAL Syria Civil Defence are still paying annual subscriptions to the ICDO of 20,000 Swiss Francs \$ 20k. The REAL Syria Civil Defence operated in both government and armed militia held areas up to 2016 when it was decided they should only work in the Syrian government held areas for their own protection as the armed groups had been deliberately targeting their crew members when on a rescue mission in occupied areas. However, it must be noted that the REAL Syria Civil defence working in Syrian government held areas, actually service 80% of the Syrian population inside Syria, including the over 6m IDPs who have also fled to the government held towns and cities. [13]

SLIDE SIX MAP

The Real Syria Civil Defence are recruited and trained inside Syria & have been in existence for 60 years.

When the White Helmets were making a concerted bid to win the Nobel Peace Prize last year, supported almost universally by mainstream media in the UK, the internet link to the RSCD at the ICDO was mysteriously re-routed to the White Helmets. I called the ICDO and spoke with their representative who assured me that it was an admin mistake, during our conversation the following statements were made by this representative, there is a full audio recording of this conversation available. [14]

1: The White Helmets are not recognised by the ICDO & are not members of the ICDO

2: The White Helmets are not even "concretely" a civil defence organisation

3: The White Helmets is the "wrong" civil defence

4: The only civil defence recognised by the ICDO and the UN is the "official" Syria Civil Defence

Western public perception has been deceived into believing the White Helmets are the only Syria Civil Defence, thus "disappearing" over 4000 REAL Syria Civil defence workers.

10: August 2016 interviews with the REAL Syria Civil Defence. I was informed that the Nusra Front and associated 'moderate rebels' who invaded areas such as East Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir Ezzor, Idlib, massacred crew members of the REAL Syria Civil Defence and stole the majority of their equipment in those areas, including fire engines and ambulances. Many of these armed groups then became White Helmet operatives. Testimony from the REAL Syria Civil Defence suggested that the White Helmets are acting as support for Nusra Front, ISIS and other heavily armed militia described as "moderate rebels". [15]

Aleppo August 2016. I conducted a short video interview with Dr Bassem Hayak of the Aleppo Medical Association, based in West Aleppo. Hayak told me that his family, trapped in East Aleppo had never seen the White Helmets and Hayak said even the UN agencies still operating in East Aleppo such as the SARC had not encountered the WH.

This testimony was further confirmed by the civilian statements I gathered while in East Aleppo during liberation, visiting each district as it was retaken by the SAA.

All civilians I spoke to, perhaps over 50 from all districts, were confused when I asked them if they knew the White Helmets. When I asked if they knew of a civil defence, their immediate response was "yes, yes Nusra Front civil defence". All these unedited interviews are available on my YouTube channel and in my reports. I was told that the White Helmets did not help civilians, they were a support group for Nusra Front, Ahrar Al Sham, Nour al Din Zinki etc. Some told me they were thieves, that they would steal from the victims bodies. One man told Lizzie Phelan of RT that they killed his baby girl by injecting air into her veins. I was told no medical treatment was available for civilians during the five year long occupation. [16]

Pierre Le Corff, a young Frenchman working as an independent humanitarian volunteer in Aleppo, filmed the main White Helmet centre in East Aleppo after the WH had left in the buses that evacuated the armed groups including Nusra Front. His film shows us that the White Helmet centre, the main one in East Aleppo, was integrated into the Nusra Front compound [Al Qaeda in Syria] and that this White Helmet centre was adorned with a variety of graffiti and flags affirming the White Helmet affiliation to the various terrorist groups. He also found documents proving that the White Helmets were working directly for Nusra Front and the various other extremist groups. [17]

The video is also available on my YouTube channel.

SLIDE SEVEN SWEDHR

11: On multiple occasions, the White Helmets have been exposed staging rescue scenes for both photo and video, recycling images of children and incidents from the conflict in Syria, to support their narrative, editing video which misrepresents the scene in question, using images from a previous incident or even fake images altogether. There are many documented instances of this but perhaps the most recent and the most disturbing is the investigation by SWEDHR who analysed the WH report on the alleged Sarmin chlorine gas attacks in March 2015. The WH video was presented at the UN in another closed door session instigated by then US Ambassador, Samantha Power, and "reduced the UN officials to tears".

The video depicts three naked, lifeless children being treated for the alleged chlorine gas inhalation. The youngest child has a hypodermic syringe inserted into his chest and moved around erratically before being withdrawn.

The SWEDHR examined the video from a professional medical & ethical perspective and came to the following shocking conclusions:

- "After examination of the video material, I found that the measures inflicted upon those children, some of them lifeless, are bizarre, non-medical, non-lifesaving, and even counterproductive in terms of life-saving purposes of children" Dr Leif Elinder
- Intracutaneous injection with adrenalin procedure... is not correctly performed and would have resulted in the death of the child, if not already dead
- In studying the film closely SWEDHR concluded that the liquid level in the syringe does not change, therefore the child is being stabbed with the syringe needle for no reason
- "I think that even from the very brief video, we can see that this child has a reduced level of consciousness: he does not vocalize, does not open his eyes,

and his only movements are to turn his head to one side and to open his mouth before he stops breathing altogether. This looks like respiratory depression, rather than injury to the lungs; he appears to be too sleepy to breathe. I think the most likely diagnosis is a drug overdose causing reduced level of consciousness and respiratory depression. Opiates are the most likely class of drug to cause this. Chlorine causes acute inhalation injury, but does not (in any of the sources I have read) cause reduced level of consciousness: the victim struggles to breathe until the end."

The implications of this conclusion by a recognised organisation of medical experts are horrifying. Did the White Helmets use already dead children as propaganda props? Why has this investigation not been aired by any one of the mainstream media? [18] [18a]

SLIDE EIGHT BODIES

12: The White Helmets have been filmed describing Syrian Arab Army bodies as "trash" and one particular video shows them standing on top of a pile of SAA soldier's bodies, whose boots have been removed or stolen. The White Helmets talk about the bodies in pejorative terms and they flick a victory V sign as the truck drives off.

Remembering, of course, their claims of neutrality.

SLIDE NINE ARMED WH

13: There are multiple images documented and archived that reveal the White Helmet operatives carrying arms or posing with arms alongside the various armed militia including Nusra Front. There is also further footage from Idlib, March 2015, showing White Helmet operatives celebrating alongside Nusra Front militia after the massacre of Syrian Arab Army forces and Syrian civilians during this attack. [19]

14: Adulatory publicity about the White Helmets is the result of a multimillion dollar sustained commercial marketing and social media promotional campaign via a network that is funded by George Soros and various US, UK and Middle Eastern enterprises. The PR network is as follows: *Awaraz – Purpose – Syria Campaign – White Helmets* and is detailed by Cory Morningstar and Rick Sterling in their respective articles. [20]

15: Analysts have observed, the White Helmets achieve on average 4 or 5 videos per day, depicting their heroic rescue efforts. The REAL Syria Civil Defence have evaluated these videos and cast doubt as to the White Helmets being true first responders or USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) experts. They pinpointed various anomalies (i) the equipment used is too heavyweight for the delicate operation of finding bodies beneath collapsed buildings (ii) the treatment of injured bodies is dangerous, they are flung onto stretchers with no back support or neck brace, for example. Many of the paramedic procedures shown on film are also deemed questionable. The White Helmets rarely travel without a sizeable camera team or crew of mobile phone cameramen. The REAL Syria Civil Defence do not, they are too busy to consider PR.

The White Helmets claim to have saved over 82,000 lives, however there is no documentation of these lives, no names, no records. With all the logistical and financial support being received by this group, is it too much to ask?

SLIDE TEN SUMMARY

In summary, this evidence points to the White Helmets being a US, UK, EU creation established in 2013, and not an independent NGO. It is a multi-million dollar US UK Coalition funded organisation. It is funded by governments involved & invested in the Syrian conflict. No one can rightly call this a grass-roots Syrian organisation.

There is an existing Syria Civil Defence that is being ignored by western media. Running parallel there is a vast fund raising network constructed to collect money which is funnelled into the White Helmets designed to replace the authentic Syria Civil Defence in the minds of the western public. The REAL Syria Civil Defence is crippled by US and EU sanctions, the White Helmets have never been affected by these sanctions, their supply chain via Turkey is unbroken.

Conservative estimates put White Helmets funding at over \$150 million thus far, which is far more than any real NGO would ever require in a decade, much less 3 years. Tax payers in funding countries have a right to know precisely what and who their money is funding.

The evidence demonstrates that the White Helmets are sectarian not impartial. They are in many instances, armed not unarmed. The promotional material produced for the White Helmets such as the recent Netflix documentary film, is often produced outside of Syria, usually in Turkey, and with any field footage supplied by the White Helmets. Who has verified the authenticity of this footage, or photographs?

The White Helmets are feeding images of "humanitarian disaster" and "war crimes" to the very same western nations who are funding them, and to politicians and media outlets who are using these visual narratives, with the explicit purpose of lobbying for a US, UK Foreign Office proposed, "Safe Zone" or "No Fly Zone" in Syria. Recent history teaches us, this No Fly Zone policy carries with it the threat of reducing Syria to a Libya-style "failed state."

Effectively, this alleged, impartial, neutral, apolitical, organisation actively campaigns for an escalation of war in Syria. This alone, should disqualify the White Helmets as a humanitarian organisation.

One of the funders of the Netflix Documentary withdrew considerable funding from the project in October 2016. The Threshold Foundation published a statement giving reasons for the withdrawal: [21]

"We have since learned that the subject of the film (the White Helmets organization) and others involved in this film are advocating for strategies that could entail international military force and escalated violence."

Many of the White Helmet 'campaigns' have since been discredited as "war fiction", and yet they are being used by the UK US Coalition as justification for continuing and increased economic and diplomatic sanctions, sanctions which are a collective punishment on the Syrian people, while the US coalition persists with equipping and arming the various militia on the ground in Syria, including Nusra Front (al Qaeda in Syria).

This only serves to ensure even more suffering and bloodshed inside Syria and delays the possibility of any real, peaceful resolution. It is incumbent upon us to ensure a full enquiry into the White Helmets as a part of the ongoing peace process.

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Security Council**Distr.: General
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**General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 31
Prevention of armed conflict**

**Security Council
Seventy-second year****Letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of
Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Upon the instructions of my Government, I transmit herewith for your attention the record of the ceasefire violations by the Azerbaijani armed forces during the month of April 2017 (see annex I).^a

I also transmit herewith the record of the ceasefire violations registered by the Ministry of Defence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic during the month of April 2017 (see annex II).^a

I kindly request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Zohrab Mnatsakanyan
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

^a Circulated in the language of submission only.



Annex I to the letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan along the State border with the Republic of Armenia

1-30 April 2017

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
1 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	13	Small arms and light weapons: 232
	Aygedzor	7	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Chambarak 6;
	Paravakar	1	Aygedzor 3; Vazashen 1)
	Aygepar	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 35
	Vazashen	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Sevkar	1	
	Chambarak	1	
2 April	Tavush, Ararat regions	7	Small arms and light weapons: 82
	Aygedzor	1	
	Paravakar	3	
	Vazashen	2	
	Yeraskh	1	
3 April	Tavush region	3	Small arms and light weapons: 76
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 2
	Movses	1	
	Vazashen	1	
4 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	11	Small arms and light weapons: 114
	Chinari	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5
	Movses	3	
	Paravakar	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Aygehovit	1	
	Vahan	2	
5 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor regions	6	Small arms and light weapons: 62
	Movses	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	Vazashen	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Bardzruni 2)
	Artanish	1	
	Chambarak	1	
	Bardzruni	1	
6 April	Tavush, Syunik regions	7	Small arms and light weapons: 126
	Aygedzor	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	Paravakar	2	
	Berdavan	1	
	Agarak	1	
7 April	Tavush, Ararat regions	10	Small arms and light weapons: 267
	Chinari	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Berkaber	2	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
	Kakhakan	2	
	Vahan	1	
	Yeraskh	1	
8 April	Tavush, Ararat regions	10	Small arms and light weapons: 103
	Aygedzor	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 1
	Chinari	8	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Chinari 1)
	Yeraskh	1	Large-calibre machine guns: 1
9 April	Tavush, Syunik regions	6	Small arms and light weapons: 28
	Chinari	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7
	Movses	1	
	Barekamavan	1	
	Baghamis	1	
	Agarak	1	
10 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	7	Small arms and light weapons: 88
	Aygedzor	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 20
	Chinari	2	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Aygedzor 10)
	Paravakar	1	
	Sevkar	2	
	Voskevan	1	
11 April	Tavush region	8	Small arms and light weapons: 203
	Movses	2	
	Paravakar	2	
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Chambarak	2	
12 April	Tavush region	13	Small arms and light weapons: 244
	Aygedzor	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 4
	Chinari	5	Large-calibre machine guns: 1
	Paravakar	1	
	Movses	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Berkavan	1	
	Bardzruni	2	
	Berdavan		
13 April	Tavush, Ararat regions	5	Small arms and light weapons: 68
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2
	Aygedzor	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Berdavan	1	
	Yeraskh	1	
14 April	Tavush, Syunik regions	15	Small arms and light weapons: 375
	Chinari	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10
	Movses	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Chinari 2; Agarak 4)
	Aygepar	1	
	Paravakar	3	
	Berkaber	3	
	Koti	1	
	Berdavan	1	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
	Baghanis	1	
	Agarak	1	
15 April	Tavush region	8	Small arms and light weapons: 177
	Aygedzor	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 11
	Paravakar	1	
	Berdavan	1	
	Aygepar	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Barekamavan	1	
16 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik, Ararat regions	9	Small arms and light weapons: 110
	Aygedzor	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 4
	Baghanis	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Aygedzor 1)
	Aygepar	1	
	Barekamavan	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Vahan	1	
	Chambarak	1	
	Yeraskh	1	
17 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	5	Small arms and light weapons: 105
	Paravakar	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Voskevan	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Trujur	1	
18 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	6	Small arms and light weapons: 86
	Aygedzor	1	
	Paravakar	1	
	Voskevan	2	
	Koti	1	
	Jil	1	
19 April	Tavush region	3	Small arms and light weapons: 17
	Chinari	1	
	Paravakar	1	
	Baghanis	1	
20 April	Tavush region	11	Small arms and light weapons: 125
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6
	Paravakar	3	
	Aygepar	2	
	Berkaber	2	
	Berdavan	2	
	Baghanis	1	
21 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	18	Small arms and light weapons: 191
	Aygedzor	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 21
	Chinari	3	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 10 (Chinari 7; Vazashen 3)
	Aygepar	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 11
	Paravakar	1	
	Movses	1	
	Aygehovit	2	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
	Berkaber	1	
	Vazashen	3	
	Koti	1	
	Baghanis	2	
	Chambarak	1	
22 April	Tavush region	5	Small arms and light weapons: 24
	Aygepar	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 4
	Kayan	1	
	Vazashen	1	
23 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	5	Small arms and light weapons: 142
	Berkaber	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Voskevan 4)
	Vazashen	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 40
	Voskevan	1	
	Chambarak	1	
24 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik, Ararat regions	19	Small arms and light weapons: 218
	Aygedzor	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 17
	Chinari	1	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 15 (Vazashen 15)
	Aygepar	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 70
	Paravakar	2	Grenade launchers: 2
	Movses	2	
	Vazashen	4	
	Kayan	1	
	Baghanis	1	
	Jil	1	
	Chambarak	1	
	Yeraskh	2	
25 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	9	Small arms and light weapons: 109
	Chinari	1	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 9
	Movses	1	
	Paravakar	1	
	Aygepar	1	
	Movses	2	
	Berdavan	1	
	Voskevan	1	
	Itujur	1	
26 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	13	Small arms and light weapons: 712
	Paravakar	2	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 7
	Movses	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Baghanis	2	
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Berkaber	1	
	Aygehovit	1	
	Voskevan	3	
	Chambarak	1	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
27 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor, Ararat regions	9	Small arms and light weapons: 122 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 15
	Paravakar	3	
	Kayan	1	
	Vazashen	1	
	Voskevan	1	
	Jil	1	
	Khndzorut	1	
	Yeraskh	1	
28 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor regions	21	Small arms and light weapons: 980
	Chinari	6	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 77
	Aygedzor	3	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 7 (Aygedzor 7)
	Aygepar	1	Anti-aircraft systems: 30
	Paravakar	3	
	Movses	1	
	Kayan	1	
	N. Karmiraghbyur	1	
	Vahan	1	
	Chambarak	3	
	Bardzrum	1	
29 April	Tavush, Gegharkunik regions	32	Small arms and light weapons: 512
	Chinari	3	Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13
	Aygedzor	8	Large-calibre sniper weapons: 45 (Vahan 40;
	Movses	2	Chambarak 5)
	Kayan	2	Large-calibre machine guns: 50
	Vazashen	7	
	Baghanis	3	
	Voskevan	1	
	Koti	1	
	Dovegh	1	
	Jil	1	
	Vahan	2	
	Chambarak	1	
30 April	Tavush region	9	Small arms and light weapons: 208
	Aygedzor	2	
	Chinari	3	
	Kolagir	1	
	Movses	1	
	Kayan	1	
	Vazashen	1	

Annex II to the letter dated 10 May 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Violations of the ceasefire by the armed forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the line of contact with the Nagorno Karabakh Republic

1-30 April 2017

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
1 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 327 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 9 Grenade launchers: 3
2 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	24	Small arms and light weapons: 327 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 3 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 8 (Mehdili 8; Taghibeyli 0)
3 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	12	Small arms and light weapons: 151 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6
4 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	36	Small arms and light weapons: 860 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 47 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 11 (Mehdili 5; Kengerli 1; Levonarkh 5)
5 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	30	Small arms and light weapons: 891 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 19 (Ashaghi Veysali 2; Sejsulan 3; Gyulistan 14) Grenade launchers: 10
6 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	22	Small arms and light weapons: 298 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 1 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Shurabad 6)
7 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	25	Small arms and light weapons: 357 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 6 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Yarmja 4) Large-calibre machine guns: 5
8 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	17	Small arms and light weapons: 218 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 10 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (m. Karachuk 4) Small-calibre mortars: 3 (Talış 3)
9 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	28	Small arms and light weapons: 555 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 33 (Mehdili 29; Nuzger 4) Large-calibre machine guns: 10 Small-calibre mortars: 3 (Ashaghi Veysali 2; Bash Karvend 1)
10 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	25	Small arms and light weapons: 219 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 9 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Bash Karvend 2)
11 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	48	Small arms and light weapons: 1,454 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 5 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 4 (Darchinar 3; Verin Chaylu 1)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/shots</i>
12 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	19	Small arms and light weapons: 329 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 14 Large-calibre machine guns: 53
13 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	23	Small arms and light weapons: 276 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Talış 3/0)
14 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	32	Small arms and light weapons: 569 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 22 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Verin Chaylu 5, Gyulistan 1) Grenade launchers: 5 Small-calibre mortars: 14 (Verin Chaylu 9, Talış 5)
15 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	21	Small arms and light weapons: 276 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 13 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Mehdili 3) Large-calibre machine guns: 110
16 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	23	Small arms and light weapons: 401 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 50 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 2 (Yarmja 2)
17 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	17	Small arms and light weapons: 210 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 1 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 26 (Yarmja 26)
18 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	47	Small arms and light weapons: 552 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 71 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 31 (Taghibeyli 1, Bash Karvend 1, Yarmja 3, Nemerli 2, Verin Chaylu 4, Gyulistan 20)
19 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	33	Small arms and light weapons: 698 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 38 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Yusifjanli 2, Yarmja 3, Verin Chaylu 1) Large-calibre machine guns: 17 Grenade launchers: 2
20 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	23	Small arms and light weapons: 417 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 65 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 9 (Kurapatkino 6, Yarmja 3)
21 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	26	Small arms and light weapons: 370 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 27 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 8 (Mehdili 5, Kurapatkino 3) Small-calibre mortars: 1 (Taghibeyli 1)
22 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	26	Small arms and light weapons: 470 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 49 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 3 (Mehdili 3) Grenade launchers: 5
23 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 630 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 15 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 20 (Gyulistan 20) Grenade launchers: 18

<i>Date</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Type of weapons/kills</i>
24 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	61	Small arms and light weapons: 743 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 40 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 16 (Mehdili 14, Gyulistan 2) Large-calibre machine guns: 20 Grenade launchers: 9
25 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	34	Small arms and light weapons: 733 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 43 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 7 (Mehdili 5, Verin Chaylu 2)
26 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	36	Small arms and light weapons: 586 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 32 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Nuzger 1) Large-calibre machine guns: 30
27 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	39	Small arms and light weapons: 350 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 9 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Mehdili 1) Large-calibre machine guns: 3
28 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	33	Small arms and light weapons: 428 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 2 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 6 (Kurapatkino 3, Jraberd 3)
29 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	29	Small arms and light weapons: 326 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 19 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 28 (Kurapatkino 6, Gyulistan 22) Grenade launchers: 2 Small-calibre mortars: 3 (Asiagh Abdurakhmanli 3)
30 April	On the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan	30	Small arms and light weapons: 600 Small-calibre sniper weapons: 23 Large-calibre sniper weapons: 1 (Mehdili 1) Small-calibre mortars: 2 (Mehdili 2)

During the reporting period, two soldiers of the Nagorno Karabakh Defence Army were killed and two soldiers were wounded from the Azerbaijani side

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Agenda item 118

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**Strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy****Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.66****Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/71/22) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.66 on strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 21 May 2017.

2. In response to paragraph 70 of General Assembly resolution 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review,¹ the Secretary-General has submitted report A/71/858, in which he indicates that a review was conducted in consultation with the Assembly and that the proposal contained in the report represents the first major institutional reform of the United Nations since he became Secretary-General (see paras. 2 and 78). The recommendations of the Secretary-General are contained in paragraph 69 of the report. In draft resolution A/71/L.66, the General Assembly welcomes the recommendations contained in the report of the

¹ The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to review, in consultation with the Assembly, the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States, upon their request, in implementing the Strategy in a balanced manner, including by strengthening cooperation with other international and regional organizations and improving the mobilization of resources necessary for capacity-building projects, with a view to providing concrete suggestions to the Assembly in this regard, by May 2017, for consideration by the Assembly during its seventy-first session.



Secretary-General and decides to establish the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in accordance with the competencies and functions set out in the report.

3. It is indicated in the statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.66 that, pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 4 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would establish a new Office of Counter-Terrorism as a separate component under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget, to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General reporting directly to the Secretary-General (A/C.5/71/22, para. 7).

4. Furthermore, it is indicated in the statement that, subject to the adoption of the draft resolution, modifications required in the biennial programme plan and priorities for the periods 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 will be presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-seventh session, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 58/269 (*ibid.*, paras. 4-6). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed establishment of the Office would imply a change in the organization of resources under programme 2, Political affairs, of the biennial programme plan for the periods 2016-2017 and 2018-2019, but would not involve any changes to its objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. Furthermore, the cycle of the intergovernmental budgetary review process is such that, at certain times during the cycle, the Assembly adopts resolutions with an impact on the biennial programme plans, and the Committee for Programme and Coordination is provided with such changes during its subsequent session.

Additional resource requirements for 2016-2017

5. Following the adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General would, *inter alia* (see A/C.5/71/22, para. 8):

(a) Appoint an Under-Secretary-General to serve as head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and to provide strategic leadership to United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. The Under-Secretary-General will be supported by a Special Assistant at the P-3 level;

(b) Transfer from the Department of Political Affairs to the Office of Counter-Terrorism the current Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, together with their existing staff, as well as all associated regular and extrabudgetary resources.

6. The Advisory Committee notes that, according to the statement of the Secretary-General, additional requirements amounting to \$373,200, net, of staff assessment, would arise for the biennium 2016-2017 under sections 3, Political affairs, and 29D, Office of Central Support Services, which would cover the costs of the following:

(a) The establishment of two posts for one Under-Secretary-General and one P-3 (\$127,200). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the resource requirements for the proposed two new posts for 2016-2017 were for a six-month period, from July to December 2017, and reflected a 50 per cent vacancy rate;

(b) Other operational expenses (\$246,000), the details of which are set out in the table below paragraph 9 of the statement of the Secretary-General. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the cost estimates for alteration and furniture reflected the standard costs budgeted under section 29D.

7. The Secretary-General indicates that the additional requirements would be absorbed within the programme budget approved for the biennium 2016-2017. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the additional resource requirements would be absorbed within section 3, Political affairs, and section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, respectively, of the programme budget and that the establishment of the proposed two new posts would require the approval of the General Assembly.

8. Concerning the transfer of staff and of financial resources from the Department of Political Affairs, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that subject to the adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly, the transfer to the new Office would include:

(a) The projected balance of \$590,500 as at 30 June 2017 against the revised appropriation of \$2,044,500 under the programme budget for the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office for 2016-2017 (actual expenditures amounting to \$1,229,400 as at 15 May 2017, with a projected expenditure of \$224,600 until 30 June 2017);

(b) The cash balance of \$93,547,000 in the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism;

(c) The six posts established under the programme budget (1 D-2, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 General Service (Other level)) and the currently existing 32 posts and positions funded from the Trust Fund. However, three posts located within the Executive Office of the Department of Political Affairs and funded from the Trust Fund to provide administrative support to the management of the Trust Fund would remain in the Executive Office of the Department.

9. Upon enquiry as to why the three posts funded from the Trust Fund would remain in the Executive Office of the Department of Political Affairs, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Executive Office of the Department provides administrative support services to the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office in the areas of finance, human resources, space planning and management, and audit advice. The three positions (2 P-3 Finance and Budget Officers and 1 General Service (Principal level) Finance and Budget Assistant) focus on the financial management of the Trust Fund, including certification of activities, administrative support to project activities, cost plan formulation and reporting of extrabudgetary resources. They also provide administrative support, travel support and low-value-procurement services. In an effort to use resources in the most cost-efficient manner, the intention of the Secretariat is that the Executive Office of the Department will continue to provide administrative support to the new Office of Counter-Terrorism, with the three positions complementing the work of existing personnel of the Executive Office. This arrangement is similar to the Executive Office of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The Advisory Committee notes that not to transfer the three posts funded under the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism to the proposed Office of Counter-Terrorism may not be fully compliant with operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/71/L.66, and trusts that clarification will be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.

Resource requirements for 2018-2019

10. Concerning the requirements for the biennium 2018-2019 that would arise following the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.66 by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General states that, owing to the timing of the draft resolution, the

requirements for 2018-2019 cannot be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium. Subject to the adoption of the draft resolution, these requirements would be presented in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 in line with existing budgetary procedures (see A/C.5/71/22, para. 11). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the resource requirements for 2018-2019 for the Office of Counter-Terrorism would be presented to the legislative bodies for their consideration during their review of the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019. The Advisory Committee will review the resource requirements for 2018-2019 arising from the adoption of draft resolution A/71/L.66 following the submission of such requirements by the Secretary-General for the Office of Counter-Terrorism for the biennium 2018-2019.

Recommendations

11. Taking into account its comments and observations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the establishment of two posts (1 Under-Secretary-General and 1 P-3), under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

12. The Advisory Committee further recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/71/L.66, additional resource requirements in the amount of \$373,200 net of staff assessment, comprising \$162,700 under section 3, Political affairs, and \$210,500 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, which, the Secretary-General indicates, would be absorbed within sections 3 and 29D, respectively, of the programme budget approved for the biennium 2016-2017 (see para. 7 above).

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Agenda item 150

**Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force
for Abyei****Financing arrangements for the United Nations Interim
Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2016 to
30 June 2017****Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions****I. Introduction**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the note by the Secretary-General on financing arrangements for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (UNISFA) (A/71/876). During its consideration of the financing arrangements for UNISFA for that period, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 19 May 2017.

II. Background

2. In its resolution 2179 (2014), the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of UNISFA until 28 February 2015 and requested the Secretary-General, with support from the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia, to explore options to expedite the implementation of the outstanding administrative and security elements of the June 2011 Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area. In its resolution 2205 (2015), the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of UNISFA until 15 July 2015 and decided to maintain the troops authorized by resolution 2104 (2013) already deployed. It also decided that the remaining authorized forces should continue to be deployed, consistent with the evolution of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, so as to enable UNISFA to provide required force protection to the Mechanism and also to enable UNISFA to fully support the Mechanism in conducting extended operations into the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone.



3. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that in June and July 2015 a force protection unit of 450 troops was deployed to the mission in response to Security Council resolution 2179 (2014), the requirements for which were not provided for in the budget for UNISFA for the 2015/16 period.

III. Additional resource requirements for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/294, appropriated an amount of \$268,256,700 gross (\$266,018,700 net) for the maintenance of the mission for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. The Secretary-General indicates that standard troop costs and other expenses in the amount of \$7.1 million were deferred from the 2015/16 period, mainly as a result of the deployment of a force protection unit of 450 troops, which was beyond the planning parameters that underpinned the approved budget for the 2015/16 period (A/71/876). The Secretary-General's budget performance report for the 2015/16 period (A/71/624) does not reflect the financial implications of this force protection unit.

5. The Advisory Committee is concerned about the lack of information provided by the Secretariat regarding the deployment of the force protection unit of 450 troops and its related cost implications in the Secretary-General's budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/624). The Advisory Committee is of the view that UNISFA should have included information on the force protection unit deployed in June and July 2015 and its related cost implications in its budget performance report for the 2015/16 period.

6. The Secretary-General indicates that costs in the amount of \$11.3 million will be incurred in the 2016/17 period as a result of the continued deployment of existing tank and artillery units (A/71/876, para. 4). He also indicates that the approved budget for UNISFA for the 2016/17 period took into account the planned repatriation of existing tank and artillery units prior to the beginning of that period (A/70/701, para. 29). The requirements of \$11.3 million for those units during the 2016/17 period, coupled with the \$7.1 million of exceptional deferred costs from the 2015/16 period, result in total additional requirements in the amount of \$18.4 million for the 2016/17 period.

7. The Secretary-General indicates that the mission will be able to absorb from within its approved budget \$7.1 million of the total \$18.4 million in additional requirements for the 2016/17 period (A/71/876, para. 5). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the cash reserves of the mission as at 15 May 2017 were \$72.8 million, before deductions relating to the operating reserve, troop and formed police unit payments and contingent-owned equipment reimbursements.

8. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, based on current projections for the 2016/17 period, the mission will utilize 100 per cent of its approved budget for the 2016/17 financial period, not including the \$11.3 million in additional resources required. The Secretary-General requests an appropriation of \$11.3 million in resources for the reimbursement of standard troop costs to the troop-contributing country (A/71/876).

9. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was also informed that if additional funding were not to be approved, the mission would not be able to meet, from existing resources, the financial commitments referred to above. It was also informed that expenditures would then be deferred to the 2017/18 period, with a

resulting continuation of underbudgeting as those amounts were not included in the mission's proposed budget for the 2017/18 period.

10. **The Advisory Committee reiterates the importance of settling claims by troop- and police-contributing countries in a timely manner.**

IV. Other issues

11. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2318 (2016), the Council considered the special report of the Secretary-General on the review of the mandate of UNISFA, a strategic review comprising an in-depth examination into the related resources and structure of its uniformed and civilian components (S/2017/293). On 15 May 2017, in its resolution 2352 (2017), the Security Council extended the mandate of UNISFA until 15 November 2017 and also decided to reduce the authorized troop ceiling for UNISFA from 5,326 to 4,791, the first reduction since 2013. As referred to in its report on the mission's budget performance for the 2015/16 period and proposed budget for the 2017/18 period, the Advisory Committee recalled that 5,101 military contingent personnel had been approved for the 2017/18 period and that, as at 28 February 2017, 4,378 were deployed (A/71/836/Add.13, para. 11). It also noted that a lower delayed deployment factor of 14 per cent was used to estimate the proposed resource requirements for the 2017/18 period (*ibid.*, para. 21). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that there would be no financial impact on the proposed budget for 2017/18 resulting from Security Council resolution 2352 (2017).

V. Conclusion

12. The proposed action to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 is indicated in paragraph 8 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/71/876).

13. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed \$11.3 million for the maintenance of the mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, in addition to the amount of \$268,624,600 already appropriated for the same period for the maintenance of the mission under the terms of General Assembly resolution 70/269. The Secretary-General should be requested to provide detailed information on actual expenditures incurred in the context of the performance report of UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.**